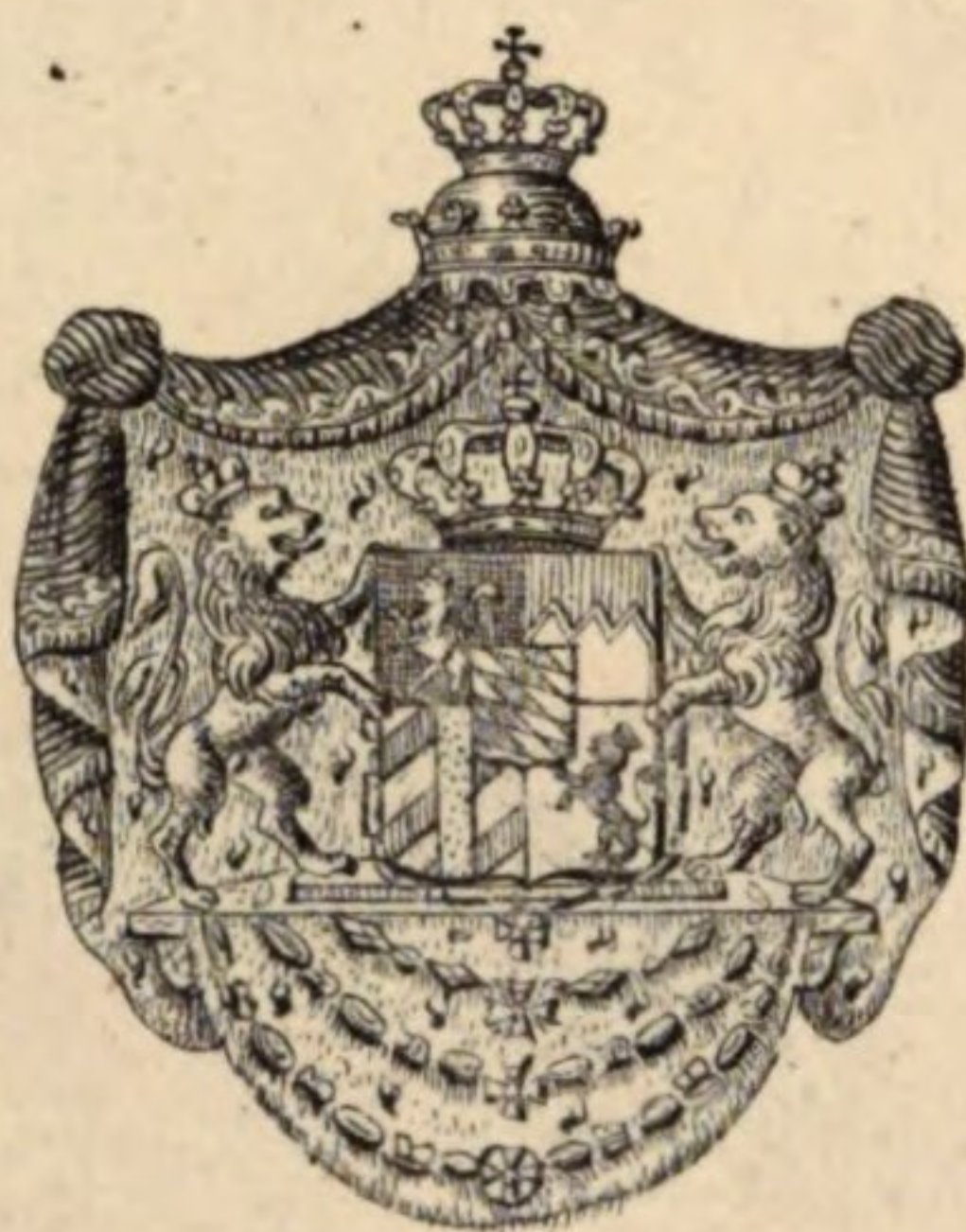


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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

HUGH FARMER.

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS IN BOARDS.

Lately Re-published,
DR. JOHNSON'S LIFE OF DR. WATTS,
WITH NOTES.

Containing Corrections and Additions, with some original
Papers.

Preparing for the Press.

LETTERS

BY THE LATE REV. JOB ORTON,
VOL. II.

Written chiefly to young Dissenting Ministers, and Students
for the Ministry; with Memoirs of his Life.

. This work will be printed in a manner uniform with
a former Volume of LETTERS to a young CLERGYMAN,
published

By the Rev. THOS. STEDMAN,
Rector of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury.

ΟΤΙ αἱ μὲν ἐπιστολαί, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί·——2 Cor. x. 10.

MEMOIRS
OF
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED
HUGH FARMER:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A PIECE OF HIS, NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED, PRINTED
FROM THE ONLY REMAINING MANUSCRIPT
OF THE AUTHOR.

ALSO,
SEVERAL ORIGINAL LETTERS, AND AN EXTRACT FROM
HIS ESSAY
ON

THE CASE OF BALAAM.

Taken from his Manuscript, since destroyed.

BY THE LATE MICHAEL DODSON, Esq.

*Hujus multi quidem in sanctam scripturam extant commentarii, sed majis viva
voce ecclesiis profuit.*—JEROM, in Vit. Pantæni.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES, PATER-
NOSTER-RROW,

By G. Woodfall, No. 22, Paternoster-row.

1804.

33. D.

MEMOIRS

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

HUGH FARMER:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A FIFTH OF HIS NEWER WORKS, PUBLISHED, PRINTED
FROM THE ONLY MANUSCRIPT
OF THE AUTHOR.

ALSO,

SEVERAL ORIGINAL LETTERS, AND AN EXTRACT FROM
HIS ESSAY

ON

THE CASE OF BALAM.

Taken from the Manuscript since deceased.

By the late WILLIAM DODSON, Esq.

—————

There is a full and complete account of the life and writings of Hugh Farmer, Esq. in the
first edition of his works, published in 1781.

—————

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. BARNARD AND S. HARRIS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
NEAR CHURCH LANE.

1781.

180

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PREFACE.

IT hath been well observed — that “ to
“ treasure up memorials of the wise, the
“ learned and the good, is to fulfil an
“ exalted duty to mankind*.” Under an
impression of this sentiment, as well as
from a high veneration for the memory
of a most valuable friend, the writer of
the following sheets ventures to present
them to the public, cheerfully relying on
the candour of judicious readers to apo-
logise for what some may deem defective
in the history of so distinguished a cha-
racter.

The life of Mr. Farmer being chiefly
spent in retirement, and almost the whole
of it in one situation, was not likely to
abound with remarkable incidents, and

* Monthly Review for February, 1804, Art. Reid.

consequently

consequently cannot be expected to afford materials for any considerable length of biographical narrative. The principal circumstances relative to this great man are those which respect his character and his writings. To these, Dr. KIPPIS has done ample justice in the fifth volume of the *BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA*.

But that large and expensive work being in the hands of comparatively few readers who personally knew Mr. Farmer, or of those who, from an acquaintance with his writings, may wish to know something of the Author, it has been thought desirable that a separate account should be published, with some additional anecdotes, which the above learned author probably did not possess.

This is now undertaken by one who had the honour of an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Farmer, as well as with several of his connections. Though in the present performance a free use has been made of Dr. KIPPIS's materials, and his words are sometimes adopted, the general composition and
method

method are new, and a few small mistakes of his are rectified.

It is much to be regretted that, in consequence of the general destruction of Mr. Farmer's papers, the world is deprived, not only of several valuable pieces of his own, but likewise of his literary correspondence, which might have afforded a pleasing and useful addition to these Memoirs*. The compiler of them, however, is happy in being able to accompany them with two of his papers which have been fortunately preserved, and which, he apprehends, will be esteemed great literary curiosities.

The first of these the author himself had deposited in the hands of a friend, with a view to its publication, for the sake of vindicating his character and writings against the severe accusations of one of his antagonists. The other, containing an Extract from his Essay on the Case of Balaam, was taken by his learned friend Mr. DODSON,

* Since the above was written, the editor has been favoured with a number of Mr. Farmer's letters in his own hand writing, out of which a few are selected and inserted in the Appendix.

and was communicated since this work was committed to the press. Of both these pieces a fuller account will be given in the proper place.

It is a satisfaction to the Editor, that this work has the countenance of several of his brethren, who well knew Mr. Farmer; one of whom, in high and general estimation, both for character and talents, writes as follows; “ I cannot but express my entire
“ approbation of your intention to publish
“ Mr. Farmer’s Life. I have often re-
“ gretted that a man of such eminence
“ should have gone off the stage with so
“ little public notice. I always considered
“ him as a person of great talents and learn-
“ ing, and as a *truly* evangelical and rational
“ christian.”

Any communications by which this Work may be improved, will be thankfully received, and inserted in another edition, if called for, or in a supplement to this.

May 3, 1804.

MEMOIRS

MEMOIRS

OF THE

REVEREND HUGH FARMER.

MR. FARMER'S remote ancestors were inhabitants of North Wales, but of what particular part cannot be now ascertained, nor have we any other information concerning them, than that he had heard them reported to be very respectable and religious. His grandfather, by the female line, from whom he received his given name, was the Reverend HUGH OWEN, of Bronyclyder, in Merionethshire. He was educated for the church in the University of Oxford; but the Act of Uniformity passing in 1662, about the time of his appearing as a candidate for the ministry, and finding himself unable, with a good conscience, to comply with the terms which that Act required, he declined applying for Episcopal Ordination, and took

his

his lot with the Nonconformists, among whom his name stands with distinguished honour* in Dr. CALAMY'S "Account of the Ejected Ministers." From thence it appears, that upon quitting the university, he went to London; but with what view we are not informed: probably it was only to consult with the ministers there, as many others did, respecting his future line of conduct. He soon afterwards retired into his native country, where he lived upon a small estate of his own, and preached *gratis* to a number of poor and ignorant people, at a great number of places, several of which were twenty miles distant, and some thirty from his own habitation, and he met with great success. But his indefatigable labours, his frequent travelling in the night, over bleak mountains, and in all weathers, together with bad accommodations in the houses of poor people, greatly impaired his health. He was a truly primitive apostolical christian, eminent for his meekness and hu-

* See Dr. Calamy's Account, page 710, and Continuation, page 838.

mility: of so unblemished and exemplary a deportment, as to secure the esteem of the principal gentlemen of the country around him, to several of whom he was nearly allied. In the course of his life he experienced several providential and remarkable deliverances, which Dr. Calamy has recorded. He died at the age of 62, in the year 1699.

Mr. JAMES OWEN, (who it is supposed was related to him, and was afterwards at Oswestry and at Salop, and very useful as a Tutor*) was for some time his assistant, and preached his funeral sermon; but by his strict injunction refrained from saying any thing about him on the occasion. We have no account of his family, except of his daughter, as being the mother of Mr. Farmer; and of one son, Mr. JOHN OWEN, who was a dissenting

* An account of his life and writings was published by his brother, Dr. CHARLES OWEN. Mr. Matthew Henry preached and published his funeral sermon. See Henry's Works, folio, p. 577.

minister, but did not survive the age of thirty years.

A more particular account of Mr. HUGH OWEN was drawn up by his grandson, the subject of these memoirs, to be inserted in a biographical work; which, as a proof of his veneration for the memory of his pious ancestor, will be given at length in an Appendix to this publication.

Of Mr. Farmer's parents no other account can be given, than that they were persons of distinguished piety and virtue, who lived in good esteem at a village a few miles from Shrewsbury; and there Mr. Farmer was born in the year 1714. Being early devoted to the Christian ministry among the Protestant dissenters, he received the first part of his grammatical learning in a school of considerable reputation at that time, which was founded by two of his progenitors, at Llanegrin, near Towyn, in Merionethshire. From hence he was removed to perfect his classical education under the tuition of Dr. CHARLES OWEN, a dissenting minister at Warrington; a gentleman of great eminence

nence for learning and piety, sweetness of temper, and politeness of manners*. He usually had two or three young men under his care, of whom one was Mr. JOB ORTON, of Shrewsbury, with whom Mr. Farmer afterwards had a close intimacy, and maintained for many years an epistolary correspondence.

About the year 1730 Mr. Farmer entered upon his course of academical studies at Northampton, under the direction of the justly celebrated Dr. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, and was one of his first pupils. Here he so distinguished himself by his abilities, application, and improvement, that his tutor was soon sensible of the honour he was likely to derive from being concerned in his education; and though the doctor did not live to see the reputation he attained in the literary world, he always spoke of him in terms of the highest respect, as some of his later pupils could witness.

* Biog. Brit. Vol. v. p. 309. Article ORTON. This gentleman was the author of the ingenious "Dissertation on Serpents."

As soon as Mr. Farmer had finished his studies at Northampton, he accepted an invitation to a service in which his tutor had preceded him, and to which it may be presumed he recommended him; namely that of an assistant to Mr. DAVID SOME*, a minister of distinguished reputation at MARKET HARBOROUGH, in Leicestershire, where Dr. Doddridge had for some time resided, and first entered upon the business of academical education, chiefly through Mr. Some's influence, which in that country was very considerable.

How long Mr. Farmer continued in this situation doth not appear, nor what was the cause of his leaving it. Though it was truly respectable, his talents qualified him for a superior and more public station, and his inclination probably led him to prefer the vicinity of London.

WILLIAM COWARD, Esq. of Waltham-

* This circumstance Dr. Kippis, in the Biographia has omitted, where he speaks of Mr. Farmer's beginning his ministry at *Walthamstow*, which is undoubtedly a mistake.—For some account of the above Mr. SOME, the reader is referred to ORTON's Life of Doddridge, p. 50.—52,

stow, a gentleman of large property, who devoted a considerable portion of it to the education of young persons for the ministry, invited Mr. Farmer (most probably on the recommendation of Dr. Doddridge, to whose students Mr. Coward was a liberal benefactor) to become his chaplain, in whose family he for some time preached, there being at that time no meeting-house in this village. But the dissenters who resided there, to whom Mr. Farmer's services were highly acceptable, speedily erected a place of worship, on a piece of ground which was given for the purpose by WILLIAM SNELL, Esq. a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood, and a regular congregation of protestant-dissenters was formed at Walthamstow, which soon greatly increased.

Mr. Farmer for some time resided in Mr. Coward's house; but the oddities of that gentleman's character soon obliged him to leave it. Among other of his whims, he took it into his head to establish a rule that his house should be shut at a very early hour in the evening, after which no person whatever, whether a resident or a visitor, was

was suffered to have admittance. Mr. Farmer happening once to stay out somewhat beyond the time allowed, was not permitted to have the door opened to him; in consequence of which he betook himself to the house of Mr. SNELL above mentioned, which occasioned the rough treatment he met with from his patron to prove one of the most fortunate circumstances of his life. For Mr. SNELL, who from that time engaged him to reside in his own family, was a gentleman of an excellent disposition, and most respectable character, who contributed every thing in his power to render the situation of his guest easy and happy. He was a Solicitor in the Court of Chancery, of the highest reputation for his ability and integrity, of whom "no greater encomium needs to be given, than that he lived in the habits of intimacy with the Lord Chancellor Hardwick, Sir John Strange, and others of the first eminence in that day, at the bar, and on the bench."

In this worthy family Mr. Farmer resided above thirty years. After the death of Mr. Snell

Snell, he continued with Mrs. Snell till the time of her decease; whose last days of widowhood were rendered happy by the society of so cheerful, kind, and pious an inmate. And the advantage to Mr. Farmer was equal; for she continued to treat him, as Mr. Snell had always done, on the footing of the truest friendship: his biographer says, “ more like an *equal* than an *inferior* ;” a mode of expression which may be justly excepted against, and which his worthy patrons would not have admitted; for if good sense, politeness, learning, benevolence, and piety, be allowed to have the preference to fortune, Mr. Farmer may be justly pronounced at least their equal; in the latter only was he their inferior, and that was not considered by them, nor ought it by any, as placing him in a state of inferiority.

There was only one circumstance attending his situation in this family which, after the decease of his worthy friends, was the cause of any regret; which was, that the pleasing accommodation which he had met with in this hospitable abode, free from
every

every domestic care, was the principal occasion of his remaining all his days in a state of celibacy; the evil of which towards the close of life, when he was left alone, and the cares of a house-establishment devolved upon him, he severely felt, and sometimes, with an air of pleasantry, lamented to his friends; at the same time cautioning those of them in the early period of life, against the like inconveniences. When visiting some of his acquaintance, with whom a younger minister boarded, he would sometimes say, in his jocular manner, "Don't use him too well: treat him roughly, that he may not be tempted to follow my example." Though this anecdote may appear trivial, and cause a smile, the subject is serious, and is capable of a very valuable improvement. The conjugal state, if entered into with prudence, is doubtless of all others the happiest, and many in the decline of life have had cause for bitter regret that they missed the favourable opportunity for enjoying it.

A single life, however, has its advantages, especially to a studious man; and Mr. Farmer

mer improved them to the utmost. In his peaceful abode with this excellent family, he enjoyed a happy leisure for prosecuting his favourite studies, so as to acquire a large fund of solid learning, particularly of that kind which qualified him for the illustration and defence of divine revelation, to which important use he applied it, as the public have witnessed in his elaborate writings, of which an account will be given in the sequel.

But though a large proportion of Mr. Farmer's time and labour was employed in the acquisition of that knowledge which was necessary to the production of such masterly publications, it was not to the neglect of the more important duties of his office as a minister of the gospel. In these it was his declared opinion, that every minister ought to excel; and therefore he recommended it to students for the christian ministry to make this their aim; lamenting it as an impropriety and absurdity, that so many should spend such a large portion of their time in learning so many other things

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things besides, and instead of, those which it is their principal business to teach. His own example corresponded with his opinion.

As a preacher, he attained to distinguished eminence. His sermons were studied with care, and composed with accuracy. The subjects of them were the most highly interesting, and the strain of them practical, spiritual, and evangelical. Though his discourses were not often doctrinal, and seldom controversial, he frequently introduced the great truths of the gospel “with such a swell of language,” as shewed his high relish for them, and sometimes occasioned such hearers as were less affected towards them, to be afraid that “he was going too far,” and yet in so scriptural and rational a manner as they could not resist. But while the grand peculiarities of the christian revelation were the frequent topics of his discourse, its moral precepts were not neglected, but all the duties of christianity were fully explained, and strongly enforced, both by evangelical and rational motives. Though his sermons did not abound with
dry

dry criticisms, calculated only to display the learning of the preacher, he embraced every opportunity for introducing such judicious and critical observations as tended to the explanation and illustration of his text, and other passages of scripture, by which his hearers were both entertained and instructed.

Mr. Farmer's manner of delivery was fully equal to his matter, and contributed not a little to recommend it. His voice was clear, pleasant and harmonious; his address was insinuating and pathetic. Though he read his discourses, he did it with so much propriety, force, and variation of emphasis and cadence, as well as with such suitable pauses, that he kept up the attention, and frequently touched the passions of his audience. His prayers were solemn, scriptural, and highly devotional, both as to matter and manner; and such as did great credit to the extemporary mode of worship practised by the dissenters. They were free from all low expressions, vain repetitions, flights of fancy, great swelling words of vanity, or any thing that betrayed irreverence

reverence or gross familiarity. They were such as discovered in him, and tended to produce in others, that temper of mind which becomes a sinful dependent creature addressing its Creator and Sovereign. In short, the whole of his public services were calculated to promote a true spirit of piety and devotion. Dr. Kippis, whose judgment few will dispute (though his own manner was different) pronounces Mr. Farmer “one of the best preachers that have appeared amongst the protestant dissenters.”

It is worthy of observation, that he had the singular talent of pleasing persons of widely different sentiments; which he did not by artfully disguising his own, with a view to ingratiate himself with all parties, as some other ministers of the like description have been accused of doing, and none more than his excellent tutor;—a charge equally unjust and foolish; for such an attempt would defeat its own end, and be sure to disgust intelligent persons of all parties.—But the means by which Mr. Farmer attained this felicity was, prudently and conscientiously avoiding all unprofitable controversies,

troverfies, and obnoxious phrafes, which “ engender ftrife ;” infifting on the grand doctrines of the gofpel in a fcriptural manner; adapting both his fubjects and his phrafeology to perfons of evangelical fentiments, fo far as was confiftent with his own views of truth ; and at the fame time handling every topic in fo rational and manly a way, and applying all to fuch practical purpofes, as to avoid giving offence to thofe hearers whose ideas of fome difputable points were different and oppofite. His pleafing and ftriking addrefs, likewise, had doubtlefs, no fmall effect in recommending him as a preacher to very different descriptions of hearers, as well as his polite and affable manner of conducting himfelf towards all in private. To which we may add, his pious and edifying converfation with ferious chriftians, contributed not a little to conciliate the efteem of fome who in certain doctrinal points were much higher in fentiment than he profefled to be. The writer of this well knew a worthy gentleman*

* The late Mr. Robert Lewin, many years Secretary to the Independent Church of Brompton, who

who was very tenacious of all the Calvinistic doctrines, who repeatedly expressed the highest veneration for Mr. Farmer's character on this account; declaring that in some of his visits, his conversation was so spiritual and heavenly, as to elevate his mind beyond what he had on any other occasion experienced.

The effects of Mr. Farmer's popularity were visible in the increase of his congregation (which was but small when he undertook the charge of it) and in the consequent enlargement of his place of worship; as also in the growing population of the village, to which many of the genteel and opulent class of dissenters resorted, and in the summer season especially had country houses or lodgings, chiefly for the sake of attending his ministry. Not less than between twenty and thirty gentlemen's carriages have been seen at the doors of his meeting-house.

cretary of the Bank, and a member and deacon of the Independent Church of Hackney; a gentleman distinguished by his strong sense and inflexible integrity, who died at the age of 81. The writer of this will ever retain a pleasing remembrance of his friendship.

But while he captivated the rich and well educated, he by no means disqualified himself for being acceptable and useful among the poor and illiterate; by many of whom he was equally valued, as his discourses were for the most part sufficiently plain to be understood by attentive hearers of ordinary capacities, perhaps more so than some composed in a much inferior style, and in respect to matter also more edifying.

For many years Mr. Farmer preached to his congregation at Walthamstow both parts of the Lord's day. But at length, an able associate being provided for him, he relinquished the afternoon service. He did not, however, long continue unemployed on that part of the day; for in the year 1761 he accepted an invitation to become the afternoon preacher at Salters Hall, upon a vacancy occasioned by Mr. Spilsbury's being chosen to succeed Mr. Barker in the morning as pastor of the church. His first sermon at this place was on Col. i. 28. and well adapted to the occasion, as some yet living, who heard it, can testify. In this situation Mr. Farmer's services

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proved

proved highly acceptable, so that he had (with one exception*) the largest afternoon audience of any among the Presbyterians; for so that congregation was denominated, though Mr. Farmer himself ranked with the Independents to the last, as also did his friend Dr. FURNEAUX†, who assisted once a fortnight at a Sunday evening lecture in the same place.

Sometime afterwards Mr. Farmer was chosen one of the *Salter's Hall* lecturers on the Tuesday morning; an office which was used to be considered as a distinguished honour, conferred on the most respectable ministers in or near the metropolis; being supported and frequented by some of the chief merchants in the city, and therefore called "The Merchant's Lecture."—Here Mr. Farmer was well attended, and generally by a number of his brethren; but this lecture had at that time begun to

* Dr. JAMES FORDYCE.

† Minister at Clapham: a man of fine abilities and extensive learning; author of the admirable "Letters to Judge Blackiston," on the Test Act.

decline,

decline, and at length became extinct, though not for some years after he resigned his concern in it.

Mr. Farmer's character, learning and talents, procured him other marks of distinction* among the Dissenters (who have indeed but few to bestow) which extended the sphere of his usefulness.

He was chosen one of the trustees of Dr. DANIEL WILLIAMS's extensive charities, and likewise one of Mr. COWARD's (his first patron) the object of whose bequest was "the promoting of the interest of Christ among the protestant dissenters," particularly by the education of ministers in two academies, the one of which at that time was at HOXTON and the other at DAVENTRY. In both these capacities Mr. Farmer

* It may probably be matter of surprise to some, that Mr. Farmer should not have received some diplomatic distinction. This doubtless he might have had as easily as some of his brethren, but he had not this kind of ambition; and he had seen so many titles conferred on those who had no appearance of a just claim to such marks of pre-eminence, that he probably thought it beneath him to accept of any.

exerted his abilities with prudence and zeal, much to the satisfaction of those who were associated with him; excepting that sometimes, through an excess of complaisance, he was for putting upon others some services for which they thought him the best qualified. When he could be prevailed upon to address the students for the ministry, he fixed their attention, and left upon their minds deep impressions, calculated to produce happy effects, and which many of them recollected with pleasure in after years.

As Mr. Farmer advanced in life, he gradually remitted of his employment as a preacher. In the year 1772 he resigned his afternoon service at Salters Hall, and in 1780, his lectureship on the Tuesday at the same place. In the pastoral relation to his church at Walthamstow, he continued for a few years longer, and when he resigned it, he quitted the pulpit intirely, much to the regret of his people there, and of many others

others of his friends; not indeed without the censures of some, as he still retained his mental faculties, and his powers of address in their full vigour. But he himself judged otherwise, and thought that some ministers continued the exercise of their public function too long; a fault which, however common, he was unnecessarily solicitous to avoid, through an excess of delicacy, and perhaps a culpable fear of falling short of himself. His entire resignation however, took place somewhat earlier than it would have done (as he was known afterwards to intimate) if his people had chosen him a proper assistant, instead of a mere afternoon preacher, who might have been called upon to fill his place in the morning, when he himself was incapable of doing it, by reason of his frequent indisposition. The want of such assistance, (which doubtless his friends would have procured, if he had freely opened to them his mind) often occasioned him much anxiety, and no small trouble in providing a substitute, when he found himself suddenly attacked with the gout, to which, in the latter

latter part of his life, he was much subject.

After he had resigned his pastoral charge, he used to spend a part of the winter at Bath, the waters of which he found to be salutary. He had formerly suffered greatly from that common scourge of studious and sedentary men, the stone, but had been twice happily recovered by a very simple medicine*, from that dreadful disorder, so that he was able with ease to ride on horseback, which healthful exercise he continued to use till within a short time of his death.

His eye-sight had for some time been growing dim, and he began to be apprehensive that he should be totally blind, as his father was, some years before his death.

* In hope that others may experience the benefit of this recipe, it is here given as the writer had it from Mr. Farmer:—"Half a pint of decoction of the root liquorice, the bark peeled off, cut in slices, gently simmered in an earthen vessel, in soft water, and taken an hour or two before breakfast." After being cured, he was advised never to leave it off; but venturing to do so after some years, the disorder returned, and on repeating the remedy it succeeded a second time.

Early

Early in the year 1785, cataracts were formed in both his eyes, so that he was unable to read any thing; and therefore employed a person to read to him. At length, though turned of seventy years, he with fortitude submitted to the operation of couching, which was performed by Baron Wenzel and his friend Dr. Wathen; which proved so successful, that he was afterwards able to pursue his wonted course of study.

In consequence of having lived many years at a small expence, and having received considerable legacies from his deceased friends, as well as liberal contributions from his congregation, Mr. Farmer had acquired so much property as placed him in easy circumstances, so that for some years before his death he kept house and a handsome table, at which he entertained his friends with liberality. In the latter part of his life, and more especially after the failure of his sight, he was particularly happy to enjoy the society of a few of his brethren, who could give him some account of what was passing in the literary world; and the rather as the number of his acquaintance

acquaintance at Walthamflow, after he had quitted his ministry, was considerably diminished. And they always found their account in giving him their company, as they received from him more than they were able to communicate.

Mr. Farmer continued to retain his mental faculties, and his capacity for conversation, in full vigour; and he possessed a tolerable share of health, as well as a fine flow of spirits, till he was seized with the gout in the stomach, which was supposed to be occasioned by eating something too cold at the table of a friend; and this speedily brought on his dissolution, which took place on the 5th of February, 1787, when he was in the seventy-third year of his age.

His deportment in the closing scene was such as became a great and good man, a true christian, and a minister of Jesus Christ: his language to those about him manifesting the most entire resignation, and the deepest humility, as well as a lively faith in the promises of the gospel, and a cheerful hope of a blessed immortality.

Agreeably to his direction in his will,

he was buried in Walthamstow church-yard, in the same grave with his valuable friends Mr. and Mrs. Snell.

On the Lord's day, the eighteenth of the same month, his funeral sermon was preached, at the request of his executors, by Mr. Urwick, of Clapham, and by the general desire of his friends it was printed. The text was, Luke xiii. 29.—“ *And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*” — This discourse, the whole of which is excellent, contains a just view of Mr. Farmer's character, without any laboured panegyric. An extract from it will not improperly be given at the close of these memoirs.

Mr. Farmer made a kind and prudent disposal of the property which he left behind him, and which, if he had been parsimonious, he might easily have increased. In his will he provided handsomely for his
few

few relations, and left legacies to his servants. He bequeathed a hundred pounds to the Fund for the Widows of poor dissenting Ministers, and forty pounds to the poor of Walthamstow parish. He likewise testified his regard to the family with which he had been so long connected, and to which he thought himself so much indebted, by a pecuniary legacy to every member of it. He also left smaller ones to several of his friends.

His executors, to whom he bequeathed a hundred pounds each, were WILLIAM SNELL, Esq. of Clapham, and WILLIAM HOOD, Esq. of Chancery-lane, barrister; the former the son, and the latter the grandson, of his great friend and patron. To another grandson, the Rev. Robert Jacomb, then minister at Salters Hall, he bequeathed his library, with the exception of such classical books as Mr. Snell might select; who was also a residuary legatee, in conjunction with his sister, Mrs. Hood.

There was one singular article in Mr. Farmer's will, which cannot be mentioned without deep regret, nor indeed without

some degree of censure. He made it his *request* that his executors would burn all his manuscripts, unless he should direct otherwise by a separate paper; but the more effectually to engage their compliance, he ordered, that unless it should be done, the legacies which he had left them should be null and void.

Accordingly, ALL HIS PAPERS WERE BURNT!

They who knew Mr. Farmer as a preacher, could not but lament that so many admirable discourses, which he had composed with so much care and accuracy, should be committed to the flames, out of which many might have been selected, and presented to the public, which would have done great credit to the author, and highly gratified and instructed numbers of readers. Nor can those who are acquainted with his works which he himself published, avoid feeling a painful concern that several other elaborate and learned performances which he had actually prepared for the press, should have been doomed to the same fate.

One of these was, “A second volume on the Demonology of the Ancients,” which he had nearly completed. Another was a curious “Dissertation on the story of
of

of Balaam," which had lain by him several years, fairly transcribed for the press, and for the printing of which he had actually made preparation. This work he had submitted to the inspection of his friends, Dr. Kippis and Michael Dodson, Esq. to whom he had imparted his design of publishing it; both of whom concurred in their opinion of its high value, and the loss of the public in its destruction. He had likewise prepared a new edition of his "Dissertation on Miracles," with considerable improvements and additions, for the further illustration and defence of the general doctrine maintained in that work, which had been long out of print; and for answering the objections which had been urged against it. For the printing of this he had actually given directions.

It is not to be supposed, nor is it insinuated, that, in the destruction of these valuable performances, "his executors could be influenced by the forfeiture which they would have incurred by preserving any of them, since both their fortunes and their characters placed them above so trifling a consideration."

consideration." Their conduct is doubtless to be solely ascribed to a scrupulous regard to what they apprehended to be the will of the deceased. But many will think, with the worthy author of his life in the *Biographia Britannica*, "that they carried their scrupulosity to an excess," because it evidently appears, from the circumstances just now mentioned, that the author himself designed to favour the public with the two last of these performances, at least; and that had not his death prevented, they would actually have been in the press. It might easily have been supposed that his sudden and severe illness might prevent his writing any thing to signify his wish to have them printed; or rather that he might think this unnecessary, after the preparation he had made for their publication.

But whatever degree of blame may attach to his executors in this matter, it must be confessed that a much heavier censure falls upon Mr. Farmer himself, in ordering *any* of the valuable productions of his pen to be destroyed, without submitting them, (as
some

some other learned men* have done) to the inspection of some judicious friends, intrusted with a discretionary power. In this, and in some other instances, it must be allowed that this great man discovered too delicate a regard to his own reputation, lest it should suffer in the estimation of fastidious readers, from any little inaccuracy or inadvertency which might have escaped him. It is also known that he discovered some degree of chagrin that his last publication did not find so rapid a sale as he expected, though the merit of it was duly appreciated by persons qualified to judge on such subjects, and who have a relish for such disquisitions, the number of whom is comparatively but small.

The extreme nicety of his taste, which perhaps was not without some degree of literary pride, though under the appearance of humility, prevented this able writer from complying with the request of several of his friends, to publish some of his devotional and practical performances, or even to indulge them with a perusal of his

* Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Kennicott, Mr. Job Orton, &c.
manuscripts.

manuscripts. This was the case with regard to the only ministerial charge that he could ever be prevailed upon to deliver, though esteemed by his audience one of the best they ever heard*.

These were foibles unworthy of such a character; to which impartiality obliges us to add the mention of another; which was too great a reservedness of temper, even towards his most intimate friends, in expressing his sentiments “on recent publications and living authors†;” as also on some much controverted points of theology. It was not unusual with him, when a question was asked him on such topics, instead of giving a direct answer to propose another. This habit doubtless arose from a settled and just aversion to theological controversy, as generally unprofitable, and often injurious.

* It was delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Thomas Tayler, at Carter-lane.

† So Dr. Kippis expresses himself, which might be partly true; and yet the writer of this has sometimes heard Mr. Farmer speak in strong terms of censure, concerning certain modern publications, and particularly some of Dr. Priestley’s.

But

But consistently with this, he might have explicitly stated his own views, to those who wished to know them for the sake of information, where he was fully decided; and wherein he was not, he might without dishonour have avowed his uncertainty.

This excess of prudent caution may have led some to suspect that his views of some important doctrines were more obnoxious than many of his friends and admirers supposed them to be; and may have led others of contrary sentiments, to consider him as being of their own party, and to censure him for want of courage in not avowing it; particularly in regard to the Unitarian controversy, on which he was the most reserved. Though candour requires us to suppose that a man of Mr. Farmer's general excellence of character had reasons, which his own conscience approved, in refraining from an explicit declaration of his opinion on subjects which have occasioned so much angry debate, yet it is not easy fully to justify him to the satisfaction of

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of such as have condemned this part of his conduct*.

* On this head a learned and worthy correspondent who perused these papers, and who knew Mr. Farmer well, writes as follows:—"It was in my opinion, and in that of many candid persons, a blameable part in good Mr. Farmer's conduct, that neither his people, nor his friends in the freedom of conversation, ever learned his own views. This conduct appears not perfectly consistent with the simplicity and sincerity which the preacher of the gospel should exemplify: it was not *declaring the whole counsel of God*; nor was it suited to correct error and enlighten the mind. It indicated (with all deference to his excellencies I would say it) timidity, and an excess of worldly prudence; cautious of alarming prejudice, and creating obloquy."—And yet it must be acknowledged that Mr. Farmer discovered courage and openness sufficient in his writings upon *other* topics, whereby he created *obloquy* in abundance. All that can be said in excuse for his reservedness upon the subjects above referred to, seems to be, that he did not see an explicit statement of his own views concerning them to be of any great importance, and that he thought that general mode of expression relating to them, which best accords with scripture language, in the use of which christians can best agree, tends most to edification.

It is moreover possible that Mr. Farmer might be of opinion with those who think, that on subjects which are confessedly mysterious, attempting a minute explanation is "darkening counsel by words without knowledge,"

It is hoped that it will not be thought inconsistent with a very high esteem for Mr. Farmer's character further to allow, that his temper was too irritable, and that he felt too tenderly the censures of his opponents, even those whose judgments he affected to despise. This is manifest in his answers to some of them, and his friends, upon particular occasions, witnessed it in conversation. Perhaps also it may be admitted that, on the other hand, his politeness and complaisance in company sometimes led him to an excess of compliment. The candid Dr. Kippis, who had a strong partiality for Mr. Farmer, freely mentions these particulars as matters of censure. But what human character is free from blemish? The

and that in every thing of essential importance in such doctrines, christians are more nearly agreed than they are ready to imagine: that their disagreement is more about *words* than *things*, and that so far as they have clear ideas, and as real devotion and practical religion are concerned, they are in the main united. Some thoughts on this head worthy of a serious attention, may be seen in Mr. FAWCETT's "Candid Reflections," and in a vindication of the same, entitled "Christian Catholicism defended."

fun has his spots, and men who have advanced the nearest towards perfection, have shewn that they were *but* men.

Notwithstanding Mr. Farmer's defects, which have been thus impartially noticed*, he was undeniably a man of distinguished excellence, who, on the whole, may be said to have had few equals among persons of his own profession. Besides what was before said of him as a christian minister, it must be added, that his private character and general deportment were such as secured the high veneration and esteem of all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. His manners were those of a polite and well-bred gentleman; and if at any time he had occasion to shew his displeasure, he never suffered himself to speak or act beneath that

* “ We must confess the faults of our favourite, to gain credit for our praise of his excellencies. He that claims, either for himself or another, the honours of perfection, will surely injure the reputation which he designs to support.” Dr. JOHNSON.

character. Though so severe a student, and so profound a scholar, he discovered nothing of stiffness or formality, but was perfectly free and affable in all companies; and when among his intimate friends, especially young persons and the female sex, he was generally facetious and jocular, though he always maintained the dignity of his character as a minister. His knowledge of the world, as well as of books, the vivacity of his temper, the readiness of his wit, his pleasing address, and his agreeable enunciation, rendered his society delightful.

He was very kind and condescending to young ministers who sought his acquaintance, and when they could engage him in some favourite subject of conversation, they found themselves equally entertained and instructed. He was so much a master of the subjects he had studied, and had words so greatly at command, that he would frequently hold on speaking, for a considerable length, on a particular point of literature with such fluency and accuracy, that it appeared (had he not usually shut

shut his eyes) as if he was reading from a printed book.

Among the advices which he gave to younger ministers, the following may be worth recording. Having asked one of them how many sermons he had composed, and being told about five hundred, he expressed some surprise, and said to him, "Let me advise you, before you make any more, to make these over again: it will be better both for yourself and your hearers."* — In conversation with another on scripture critics, Mr. Farmer asked him whether he had *Grotius*, and being answered in the negative, he replied, "Then sell all your commentators and buy *Grotius*." — Another piece of advice which he sometimes gave was, "never

* It is certain that many young dissenting ministers compose more sermons than is consistent with accuracy, or with due application to reading, and those other studies which are of importance to their general qualification for their office. If the above advice should not be thought proper to be literally followed, it will be allowed by judicious persons to suggest a hint that may be very usefully applied. Sermons well studied will furnish even more *variety* than double the number of hasty superficial compositions.

to raise a difficulty without being able to solve it."

Mr. Farmer possessed great generosity of temper, and in his distribution to charitable designs and necessitous objects, it was supposed that he went to the utmost extent of his circumstances. His prudent liberality towards his brother Mr. JOHN FARMER, is worthy of particular notice; and the rather as his studied privacy in this matter occasioned some persons to reflect upon him as deficient in fraternal kindness. That gentleman, who was a dissenting minister, of strict Calvinistical sentiments, had been, in consequence of some little mental derangement, for some years incapable of any stated ministerial service, and was in a great measure dependent upon the benevolence of his friends for his subsistence. Mr. Hugh Farmer was ever ready to assist him, but through some obliquity of temper, he refused to be knowingly indebted to his brother for such assistance. He therefore kindly conveyed his benevolence to him through the medium of one of his friends, so that he had no suspicion from whence it came.

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If the warmth of Mr. Farmer's temper occasionally led him into any impropriety of speech, it afterwards gave him great concern, and he shewed himself ready to make every proper concession, in order to prevent a breach of friendship. His candour towards persons of different sentiments and parties in religion, was very extensive and impartial. Bigotry was what he abhorred in others, and he was at the greatest distance from it himself.

Though he was a Protestant Dissenter from conviction, and by no means indifferent to the support of his principles as such, he manifested the utmost candour towards worthy men and ministers of the established church. With some of the latter he held a correspondence; among whom is to be mentioned with distinguished respect Dr. NEWCOME, the late learned and worthy Archbishop of Armagh, who was pleased to express great satisfaction in his publications, and presented to him his own.

Of Mr. Farmer's learning and abilities, his works, which are before the public, will

will afford the best evidence, and supersede any encomium. It may not be improper to close this account with the following just character of him, extracted from the discourse addressed to his congregation upon occasion of his decease.

CHARACTER

CHARACTER OF MR. FARMER,

AS GIVEN BY THE

REV. THOMAS URWICK,

IN HIS FUNERAL SERMON.

AFTER a brief account of Mr. Farmer's birth, education, and early settlement, Mr. Urwick thus proceeds — " His uncommon natural abilities, engaging manners, and great erudition, would have appeared with much dignity in any station of life—and when these powers and accomplishments were united with a religious temper of mind, they did not fail to distinguish him as a minister of the gospel; to the important duties of which office he cordially devoted himself, and always made his learning and liberal studies instrumental to the interest of religion.

" But

“ But there were some peculiar features in his private and public character, which deserve to be more particularly mentioned, and which I am pleased with the opportunity of laying before those who have been for many years eye-witnesses of them.

“ He was lively and brilliant in conversation to an uncommon degree; but always in the style of a gentleman, and the decorum of a minister. No one possessed more real gravity, upon all occasions that required it, whether in the pulpit, in the chamber of sickness, with mourning friends, or when engaged upon subjects of religion and learning in the conversation of his brethren. In this he bore a strong resemblance to his amiable tutor. They both possessed a mental vigour that sustained the labour of close study and difficult investigation; and yet retained that liveliness of imagination and flexibility of mind which rendered them highly entertaining in the most gay and exhilarating conversation where the mirth was innocent.

“ Those

“ Those who were acquainted with Mr. Farmer must have observed, that his natural temper was warm, and that he had a high spirit. But it is justice to say, that whenever these led him into any little impropriety of speech or behaviour, he was solicitous to make every proper concession afterwards, and shewed great uneasiness till such offences were quite cleared away. His regular behaviour was in the highest degree kind, obliging, and polite. Every man was treated by him with honour, and he was exalted above every thing mean and selfish.

“ He was most sincere and cordial in his friendships. He saw with a quick eye every kindness that was done to him, and readily acknowledged its full value; nor did he ever forget to return such favours whenever he had an opportunity of doing it. He had also much generosity of mind, and upon many occasions was liberal, far beyond what is usual in persons of his moderate fortune. But as this disposition was generally exerted in a private way,
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and principally to the poor and afflicted, we are sure the motives that influenced it were good.

“ His good understanding and acquaintance with the world, delivered him from all religious bigotry. In the freest conversation I ever had with him, about sects and parties of christians, I never heard him utter a severe or uncandid thing of any set of men whatsoever.

“ It is impossible for me to do justice to Mr. Farmer's abilities as a preacher. His elocution was clear and strong; his manner of address handsome and very insinuating; and his discourses were well stored with the serious and practical truths of the gospel. He was equally fond of using the language of the sacred writings as he was conscientious in holding up their doctrines to his hearers; and was used to say, ‘ that the evangelical language was not only most generally acceptable to our hearers, but that which carried the evangelical doctrines with the greatest force to the heart.’

“ He

“ He was particularly distinguished by the animation with which he delivered his public discourses. Every one saw that he felt the sentiments which he uttered, and his attentive hearers happily experienced that he conveyed his own feelings to them. Through all his public services there was a most happy variety of thought and expression, as well as a constant flow of lively and humble devotion. — His discourses were peculiarly ornamented and enriched with criticisms for the explanation of difficult passages of scripture, or the farther illustration of others. These criticisms were always manly, had evident importance in them, and instead of being dry and tedious, they much enlivened his sermons.

“ By these means he was always in much estimation as a preacher, and had a most respectable number and class of hearers, both in this place, and at Salters Hall. He retained all this excellency to the last; and there was an universal and very sincere lamentation

tation upon his resignation of all public duty; for he was in possession of as much popularity as ever he had, when he was induced to take this step by frequent returns of bodily disorder, and the apprehension of the total loss of sight.

“ The world is in possession of those publications which gave abundant proof of Mr. Farmer’s abilities and application to study. The design of them was, to establish the evidence of the divine authority of the scriptures in the clearest and most satisfying manner. He did not live to complete the work, nor do I know that any person hath been made acquainted with the [whole] plan of it. What we have seen, shews him to have been well skilled in those languages, and much acquainted with those ancient writings, the knowledge of which is properly called learning; and that he was equal to the laborious and very difficult design which he had undertaken. These publications procured him the acquaintance and praises of several persons of
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of eminent learning and dignity, both at home and abroad.

“ I am sorry to add, that he has left the strictest orders in his will, that his MSS. of every sort should be burnt without inspection. He was induced to this by the shameful abuse which is often made of posthumous writings*; and he had delayed to prepare [*many valuable papers*] for the press himself, from a desire to proceed in his greater work.

“ With all this learning and character this excellent man was not in any degree ostentatious and assuming. He never carried about him the parade of literature, the pride of science, or the haughtiness of great ability.

“ In Mr. Farmer were united the gentleman, the scholar, and the minister of the gospel. It is easy to conceive how

* That such abuse is too common is readily allowed; but this cannot be admitted as a sufficient reason for the destruction of such great works as he had himself intended, and actually prepared for the press.

each of these would give dignity and value to the other. When we consider him in his whole character and endowments, we may truly say, he was without a superior among us; and, by his death, religion and learning have lost an able friend and advocate.

“ In his last illness, which was lingering and painful, he shewed much patience, and was quite resigned to the will of God. To a minister and friend, who frequently visited him on that occasion, he expressed his great consolation from the promises of the gospel, and the covenant of mercy which was sealed by the blood of Christ. He was exceedingly earnest in the acknowledgement of his own unworthiness, and his dependence upon the grace of God for acceptance and reward. His frequent expressions were, “ That he had been a very ‘ unprofitable servant:’ that he was an unworthy creature: that he was ‘ the least of all saints,’ &c.

Mr.

Mr. Urwick properly adds, "There is much foundation for such expressions as these from us all. The greatest and best human characters are unworthy in the sight of God. Humility is a most becoming temper, when we are going to appear before his tribunal, and we must always 'look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'"

* Jude, ver. 21.

There is much foundation for such expressions as these from usual. The greatest and best human characters are unworthy in the sight of God. Humility is a most becoming temper, when we are going to appear before his tribunal, and we must always look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

• July 25, 1891.

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ANALYSIS OF ALL
A LIST AND ANALYSIS

OF ALL

MR. FARMER'S PUBLICATIONS:

Chiefly extracted from the Biographia Britannica, with occasional Remarks.

IT is remarkable that Mr. Farmer never printed more than one SERMON, which was “preached at Walthamstow, on the day of public Thanksgiving, Oct. 9, 1746, on the suppression of the Rebellion in the year 1745.”—The title is, *The duty of thanksgiving and paying our vows made in a time of trouble, explained and enforced.* The text PsAL. l. 14. ‘Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High.’—It is a good and well composed discourse, full of loyalty and devotion; but being written at so early a period, it ought not to be considered by the few that may possess it, as a specimen, though a very promising omen, of the author’s preaching in his maturer years.

He produced no other publication till the year 1761, when he printed “An Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ’s temptation in the Wilderness.”—The general object of this work is to shew, That this part of the evangelical history is not only to be understood as the recital of a visionary representation, but that the whole

of it was a **DIVINE VISION**, premonitory of the labours and difficulties of our Lord's public ministry, on which he was then about to enter.

An interpretation so *new* and *singular** (Dr. Kippis says) was not likely to pass unnoticed. Accordingly the next year there appeared an anonymous answer to it, entitled, "Christ's Temptations real Facts; or a Defence of the evangelical History, &c." A work which, according to the opinion of able judges, abounded more in learning than judgment.

A second edition of Mr. Farmer's "Inquiry," being soon called for, he subjoined a number of notes, in which the subject received additional illustration.

* Though no distinct treatise had been published on this view of the subject, it should not be omitted here, that Mr. MASON, of Cheshunt, the author of the excellent piece on *Self-knowledge*, claimed the thought as his own, which he had illustrated in one of his printed sermons; and in the hearing of the writer of this, censured Mr. Farmer, for not having made a reference to it.

This sermon of Mr. Mason, on Christ's temptation, is found in a Collection, entitled "The Protestant System," vol. II. p. 307. But the attentive reader of that discourse will find that Mr. Mason's censure was not well founded, since though he and Mr. Farmer considered the whole of the temptation as visionary, Mr. Farmer represented it as a vision from the divine Spirit, whereas Mr. Mason supposed it to be the effect of the influence which the devil was permitted to have on Christ's imagination.

This essential difference between Mr. Mason's scheme and his own, Mr. Farmer has pointed out in his second and third editions of the essay; see note to § II. where he also proves that *Le Clerc* had been falsely supposed to have maintained the same opinion with his.

In 1764, he published "An Appendix to the Inquiry," containing some further observations on the point in debate, and an answer to the objections which had been urged against his scheme.

A third edition of the "Inquiry" appeared some time afterwards, without any date, in which the author inserted several further additions, and particularly in the third section, to confirm his hypothesis of Christ's being *led* into the wilderness *in* or *by the Spirit*—This first work of our author was only a prelude to more extensive designs which he had formed.

In 1771, he published "A Dissertation on Miracles," in a large octavo volume, designed to shew "that they are arguments of a divine interposition, and absolute proofs of the mission of a prophet."—This was characterised in the Monthly Review, as "one of those substantial and durable treatises that will always be considered as valuable and important acquisitions to the cause of sacred literature."—In the preface to this work, the author gives this account of it. "What is attempted in the following sheets, is to refute those principles of demonism which have done so much discredit to the argument drawn from miracles in favour of the Jewish and Christian revelations. Without entering into the peculiar nature and circumstances of the scripture miracles, I consider only the general question, whether miracles are in themselves evidences of a divine interposition, and consequently, when properly applied, contain proofs of the divine original of a supernatural revelation. Nor is it merely the credit of revelation that is concerned in the present question, but the honour also of the general administration

ministration of divine providence, and the common interest of piety and virtue."

The work opens, CHAP. I. with some preliminary considerations.—§ 1. The nature of miracles is explained and shewn to consist in their contrariety to those general rules by which the visible world is governed, or the common course of events in it.—§ 2. proves that miracles are not impossible to the power of God; nor repugnant to our ideas of his wisdom and immutability; that they do not imply any inconsistency in the divine conduct, or any defect or disturbance of the laws of nature.—§ 3. examines the different causes to which miracles have been ascribed; and at the close, the author thus states his own scheme:—"That they are always to be ascribed to a divine interposition, being never wrought but either immediately by God himself, or by such other beings as he commissions and empowers to perform them."

CHAP. II. contains arguments from reason to prove, that miracles are never effected without a divine interposition.—§ 1. shews that the same considerations which manifest the existence of created intelligences do much more strongly conclude against their acting out of their proper sphere.—§ 2. that there is no proper evidence of the truth of any miracle, but such as may fitly be ascribed to the Deity. All the facts appealed to in proof of the miraculous agency of evil spirits are either not supernatural, or not real.—§ 3. that as the laws of nature are ordained by God, and essential to the order and happiness of the world, it is impossible he should delegate to any of his creatures a power of working miracles (at their pleasure) by which those divine establishments may be superseded and controlled; and § 4. that the ascribing such a
power

power to any besides God, and those immediately commissioned by him, subverts the foundation of natural piety, and is a fruitful source of idolatry and superstition. § 5. shews, that if miracles were performed in proof of false doctrine, mankind would be exposed to frequent and unavoidable delusion.—§ 6. that on this supposition miracles could not be authentic credentials of a divine mission, and certain criterions of truth.

CHAP. III. Is designed to shew, that the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, strictly corresponding with right reason, always represent miracles as the peculiar works of God, and never attribute them to any other beings, unless they act by his immediate commission.—§ 1. considers the view which the scripture gives us of angels, both good and evil, and of the souls of departed men, as inconsistent with their liberty of working miracles.—§ 2. contains an accurate and curious inquiry into the representation which the scripture affords of the nature and claims of the heathen divinities, and proves, by the testimony of ancient historians, poets and philosophers, and by uncontroverted facts, that the demons of the heathen were not spirits of a higher origin than the race of man, but were such departed human souls as were believed to have become demons; which supposition he goes on to confirm from the authority of the Old Testament; and considers the use of the word demon in the Septuagint, in Philo, in Josephus, and in the New Testament.—In § 3. the author examines the character and pretensions of the magicians, diviners, and forcerers of antiquity; states the scripture account of them, and refutes the various pleas alledged by christians in favour of the ancient magic.—§ 4. relates to the false prophets

prophets spoken of in scripture, and explains *Deut. xiii. 1—5. Mat. xxiv. 24.* and several passages in the epistles, particularly Pau's prophecy concerning the *Man of Sin*, all of which he shews, intend nothing more than artful tricks to impose upon the vulgar.—§ 5. proves that the scripture represents the **ONE TRUE GOD**, as the sole Creator and Sovereign of the world, which he governs by fixed and invariable laws, and that to him they ascribe miracles as proofs of his divinity and sole dominion, in opposition to the claims of all other beings.—§ 6. shews that the scripture uniformly represents all miracles as being in themselves an absolute demonstration of the divine mission and doctrine of the prophets, at whose instigation, or by whose means they are performed, and never directs us to regard their **DOCTRINE** as the **TEST** of their **MIRACLES**, but on the contrary teaches us to judge of the truth of their **DOCTRINE** by their **MIRACLES**. So did Jesus Christ himself. The messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, is a doctrine which natural reason cannot of itself discover to be either true or false. It admits of no other certain proof than the testimony of prophecies or miracles.

CHAP. IV. is taken up in shewing that miracles, considered as divine interpositions, are a certain proof of the mission and doctrine of a prophet: and in pointing out the advantages and necessity of this proof, in confirming and propagating a new revelation. On the whole, “we do not hesitate (says his biographer) in pronouncing this to be the most important and masterly performance that has appeared on the subject.*”

* A new edition of this work, which has long been wanted, is lately published, and handsomely printed in 12mo. price only 3s.

Soon

Soon after its publication a notion was propagated that the author had made a considerable use of Mr. LEMOINE's treatise on the same subject, and written, it was said, with the same view, without any acknowledgment. Mr. Farmer thought it behoved him to vindicate himself from the charge of plagiarism, which he did in a pamphlet published in 1771, intitled "An examination of the late Rev. Mr. LEMOINE's Treatise on Miracles." In this piece he proposed to give a particular view of that work, in order to shew how much it differs from his own, and is even contrary to it. This he did with great clearness and success, so as to wipe off the foul and malicious aspersions. Though he owned that he had read the book when it came out, he denied that he had been in any way indebted to it, or that he had revised it in publishing his own, which had lain by him some years before the other appeared; and justly observed "that he could be under no temptation to borrow from an author whose sentiments he totally disapproved." He did not, however, solely confine himself to the defence of his own reputation, but took occasion still further to confirm and illustrate the points which distinguished his "Dissertation on Miracles." With respect to the ancient magic, in particular, he added a number of important remarks. Though his accuser in "The London Magazine" continued with bitterness to renew his attacks for several months, whosoever compares the two publications will easily perceive, that it was the mere effect of resentment; the origin of which was easily accounted for in some circumstances not very honourable to that writer, with which it is not worth while to trouble the public.

In 1775, Mr. Farmer published another important and elaborate

elaborate work: "An Essay on the Demoniacs of the New Testament."—The design of this was to prove, that the persons said to be "possessed of demons," were not really under the influence of evil spirits, but afflicted only with such bodily disorders as had been commonly ascribed to such influence.

In the prosecution of this design, the author lays down the following propositions.—That the spirits which were thought to take possession of mens' bodies, are called in the New Testament, not DEVILS but DEMONS—that whenever the word occurs either in scripture or other ancient writings, we are not to understand by it fallen angels, but pagan deities, such as had once been men:—that those persons spoken of as having demons, suffered real and very violent disorders:—and that the particular disorders which the ancients, whether Heathens or Jews, ascribed to the possession of demons, were such only as disturbed the understanding:—that the demoniacs spoken of in the New Testament were all of them either mad-men or epileptics:—that the disorders imputed to demoniacal possessions were not peculiar to the country of Judea, or to the time of Christ; that they abounded no more there, or at that time, than in any other; and that they were not different from those mentioned by other ancient writers:—that reason affords no sufficient ground for supposing the reality of demoniacal possessions, but strongly remonstrates against it; and that the disorders supposed, proceeding from natural causes, are cured by natural remedies:—finally, that the doctrine of demoniacal possessions, instead of being supported by the Jewish or Christian revelation, is utterly subverted by both.

The next division of this work is employed in solving the several objections which have been urged against the author's hypothesis, which he does with great fairness and ingenuity. In the close, he states the inconveniences which attend the common notion of possessions; and the advantages which result from his own view of the subject; both of which are represented in a striking light.

This work of Mr. Farmer was soon attacked by Dr. WORTHINGTON, a respectable and learned clergyman, before known by some valuable writings, in a piece intitled "An impartial Enquiry into the Case of the Gospel-demoniacs; with an Appendix, consisting of an Essay on Scripture Demonology." The author neither preserved his temper, nor added any thing to his literary reputation. Mr. Farmer thought, however, that some things which he had advanced deserved consideration; and therefore

In 1778 he printed "Letters to the Rev. Dr. WORTHINGTON, in answer to his late publication, intitled, &c."—These letters exhibit a clear and judicious epitome of what had already been advanced in the course of this controversy, and contain much more new matter than might have been expected upon a subject which the author had already so amply discussed.

But Mr. Farmer had now another antagonist to contend with, from whom high expectations were formed by his particular connexions, who were acquainted with his design; this was the late Rev. JOHN FELL, at that time minister of a dissenting congregation at Thaxted, in Essex, and afterwards one of the tutors of the Independent Academy, at Homerton.

In

In 1779, Mr. Fell published a pretty large 8vo. volume, intituled "Demoniacs: an Inquiry into the heathen and scripture Doctrine of Demons; in which the hypothesis of the Rev. Mr. Farmer, and others on this subject, are particularly considered."

"We deny not to Mr. Fell, (says Dr. Kippis) the praise of ability, acuteness, and learning. But we cannot speak with equal commendation of the spirit with which his book is written. In particular, we do by means agree with him in his deductions of the injurious consequences to natural and revealed religion, which he apprehends to result from the doctrine advanced in the *Dissertation* on Miracles, and the *Essay* on the Demoniacs. It gave us pleasure, however, to find Mr. Fell, in one place (p. 337) to express himself in the following manner, "Far be it from us to impute any evil design to this writer. We doubt not he really meant to serve the cause of virtue and religion [why not of divine revelation also?] which he thought could not be more effectually done than by removing every thing which appeared to him in the light of superstition." How consistent this declaration was with other parts of this author's writings, will hereafter appear.

Mr. Farmer, (who discovered to his friends no small degree of anxiety when he heard of this intended publication) did not think proper, when he had read it, to write a distinct reply, for reasons* which he gave in his next publication on the subject, which appeared in the

* The author's reasons for declining a particular reply to Mr. FELL, may be learned from the following passage, in his *Introduction*, p. 46—48. Having mentioned some learned authors who differed from him, he adds "There is another writer whom

year 1783, containing five hundred pages, and which was intitled,

“ The general prevalence of the worship of human whom I should never have thought of in any connection with these, had he not transcribed the objections of Dr. *Blackwell*, which he has done without acknowledging his obligation. This gentleman has been pleased to honour me with his notice, and to oblige me with an uncommon measure of abuse. With equal candour and penetration he compliments me with sinister motives and disguised infidelity. His censures may do me credit; most certainly they disgrace none but himself. They discover to the world what spirit he is of, and what opinion he entertains of his own cause, which he could not support without the aid of calumny. There is another circumstance which serves to shew his distress; his continually perverting my language, and misrepresenting my sentiments so grossly, that I should have often been at a loss against whom his performance was written, had he not informed us.

“ Whether his misrepresentations are wilful or not, let others form what judgment they please: I barely state the facts. The account he has given, not only of *my* sentiments, but even of those of the most respectable writers of antiquity, is so very remote from the truth, that, to whatever cause it is to be ascribed, I determined from the first never to write any thing *merely* in answer to *him*. Such answer must have entirely consisted in shewing that he either could not or would not understand the plainest language; an undertaking which could yield neither pleasure nor benefit to the reader. Nevertheless, when I had resolved on reasons which had no relation to this gentleman, to lay before the public my view of the heathen gods, I judged it not improper to point out his errors upon this subject, in order to furnish a *specimen* of his manner of writing, without which it would have appeared incredible that any one could write in the manner he has done ”

The above passage is the rather inserted, as it may serve to justify Mr. Farmer in declining any other notice of Mr. Fell's last publication, than what he took in the paper annexed to these

spirits in ancient heathen nations asserted and proved."

—In a long introduction he shews, that a critical knowledge of this subject may answer many valuable purposes; particularly to impress us with a just sense of the high importance of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and the peculiar propriety of those extraordinary means which were employed to accomplish our deliverance from Idolatry.

CHAP. I. He endeavours to prove, by the testimonies of heathens themselves, that in the nations stiled barbarous, or that were in an uncivilised state, religious honours were paid to dead men.

CHAP. II. abounds with authorities to shew that the case was the same amongst the most polished nations.

CHAP. III. offers reasons of a more general nature, viz. those which are drawn from the testimonies of the ancients, heathen poets, philosophers, historians, and Christian Fathers: also from uncontroverted facts, such as monuments and institutions, designed to perpetuate the heroes who became the objects of pagan worship; sepulchres, temples, altars, pyramids, statues, sacrifices, games, festivals, and other appendages of superstition and idolatry. His argument goes to prove, not only that human spirits were generally worshipped among the heathens, but that such spirits *alone*, with a few exceptions, were, in the nations with which we are acquainted, the direct and immediate objects of the established worship.

This work, though it reflects great honour upon

Memoirs, which farther illustrates Mr. Fell's former manner of writing, and plainly discovers that he had made considerable improvements in it.

the

the author's abilities and learning, did not meet with so rapid a sale as his former publications, being considered as more dry and uninteresting, and many of his readers being satisfied with what they had already seen on this subject. Some of his friends also thought that his manner of treating his last opponent was reprehensible. Though he professed not to answer Mr. Fell's book, he inserted several notes upon particular passages in it, which plainly shewed his sensibility to the attacks made upon him by that writer. "Indeed (says the truly candid Dr. Kippis) we cannot approve of the oblique manner in which some of these notes are composed. It would have been far preferable in our author, either not to have taken any notice of Mr. Fell at all, or to have done it in a more open and manly way."

Mr. Fell was not backward to defend himself, and to retaliate upon his antagonist. In 1785 he published "The Idolatry of Greece and Rome distinguished from that of other heathen nations; in a Letter to the Rev. Hugh Farmer."—"At the same time (continues Dr. Kippis) that in this tract ample retaliation is made upon Mr. Farmer, for his personal severities, it appears to us to contain many things which (if he had continued to publish on the subject) would have been found deserving of consideration and reply."

The Doctor adds, "Here closes our account of Mr. Farmer as an author; for though he pursued his literary inquiries, and employed himself in composition, nothing produced by him ever did, or EVER CAN, make its public appearance."

The compiler of these Memoirs is happy to say, that the *last* assertion of the worthy Doctor is not founded in fact, and arose from his not recollecting
what

what he had certainly been told, that Mr. Farmer had drawn up some brief REMARKS upon Mr. Fell's last publication; in which he most satisfactorily justifies himself against the severe and injurious charges of his irritable and much irritated opponent; particularly by proving that he had dealt unfairly in regard to many of his quotations from his writings, and made him to speak a language not only different from, but contrary to what he had actually used.

Of this paper, an exact copy is now presented to the public, with an account of the way in which the editor became possessed of it, and some other circumstances relating to it.

REMARKS

ON SOME PASSAGES IN

MR. FELL'S LETTER TO MR. FARMER,

ENTITLED THE

IDOLATRY OF GREECE AND ROME,

DISTINGUISHED

FROM THAT OF OTHER NATIONS.

DRAWN UP

BY MR. FARMER,

AND

PUBLISHED FROM HIS MANUSCRIPT.

Impedit ira animum, ne possit cernere verum.

REMARKS

MR. PETER'S LETTER TO MR. JAMES

TOULATRY OF GREECE AND ROME

FROM THAT OF OTHER NATIONS

BY MR. PETER

TRANSLATED FROM THE MANUSCRIPT

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following REMARKS on Mr. FELL's last publication, were drawn up by Mr. FARMER, and a short time before his death, were put into the hands of a friend, with a desire that he would publish them in whatever form he pleased, only wishing himself not to appear any further in a controverfy with that angry writer, and desiring nothing more than to have his character vindicated from the injurious charges brought against him, particularly as a disguised enemy to divine revelation.

Mr. Farmer at the same time made him a present of his own works, with a

request that he and another friend* would take the trouble of examining the references to them, as well as to Mr. Fell's performance, in order to ascertain the accuracy of them, which they accordingly

* The late Mr. BAXTER COLE, the editor of Dr. LARDNER's Works: well known as a man of great learning, indefatigable industry, uncommon accuracy, and inflexible integrity. He had formerly been a teacher of the classics in a school at Peckham, and was for several years assistant to the Rev. Mr. Towle, but latterly preached only occasionally.

To preclude all suspicion with regard to the authenticity of the following tract, or the right of any one to print it, after Mr. Farmer had ordered all his papers to be destroyed, it may be proper to inform the public, that the person to whom he had committed this manuscript, was Mr. PALMER, of Hackney, to whom he voluntarily brought it, for the purpose above related, a very short time before his last illness, and who could not consider himself as at all concerned in Mr. Farmer's order to his executors in his will, or in the least accountable to any person whatever.

did

did, when together, and found them perfectly correct.

Not having brought forward this paper in any form before Mr. Farmer's decease, the editor suppressed the publication, in consequence of Mr. Fell's having come to reside in his neighbourhood, and from an unwillingness to give him any offence, which might prevent the friendly acquaintance which he wished to maintain with him.

After two or three agreeable interviews, he took occasion to inform Mr. Fell, that he had such a paper in his hands, and offered him a sight of it, in order to have his observations upon it, whenever he would please to call for that purpose.—

Mr. Fell never entered his house after-

wards, nor made any inquiry about this paper, but from that time appeared to commence hostilities against him, which were discovered in various singular instances, with which the public shall not be troubled. The editor, however, was still unwilling to bring forward these REMARKS, though justice to Mr. Farmer seemed to require it, from a desire to avoid an open rupture with this gentleman. But as now both these disputants are gone off the stage, he cannot satisfy himself as doing justice to an injured character, or approving his fidelity to the trust committed to him, any longer to suppress this his friend's vindication of himself; in which sentiment some judicious persons who have perused it, heartily concur. And it is presumed many of Mr. Farmer's friends

will

will be gratified in seeing this satisfactory defence of his character as an author and a christian, by a bare statement of facts, which are left to speak for themselves. This, the reader is desired to observe, is the grand object of the present publication, and not “the revival of a controversy which has long since been finished.” That might properly have been objected to; but it will be seen, that the following Remarks have no such tendency, as they do not enter into the controversy at all.

If the editor should incur censure for thus bringing forward matters which affect the reputation of a man (in many views respectable) after his decease, he will answer, in the words of a late well-known writer*, in a similar case:—“Though I

* Sir J. Hawkins, Life of Johnson.

“ would not war with the dead *offensively*,
“ I think it necessary to be strenuous in
“ defence of my illustrious friend; which
“ I cannot be without strong animadver-
“ sions upon a writer who has greatly in-
“ jured him.”

If any thing farther be necessary as an apology for this publication, it shall be the following extract from a letter of a judicious, learned, and candid correspondent, who had revised the manuscript.—

“ That you should publish Mr. Farmer’s
“ Remarks, I conceive, cannot admit of
“ a question; not upon the grounds only
“ of its being a literary curiosity, and a
“ tribute of justice to his memory and
“ character; but as a duty and obligation
“ laid upon you by a worthy friend, who in-
“ trusted, by this deposit, the vindication
“ of

“ of his name to you. The question is,
“ whether you have not incurred some
“ blame by *deferring* the publication so
“ long. If it ought to be printed, it can-
“ not be without such a narrative as must
“ reflect, how candidly soever drawn up,
“ on Mr. Fell. Indeed Mr. Farmer’s con-
“ viction of his gross misrepresentations,
“ &c. is as heavy a charge against him,
“ as any your narrative can contain,
“ though not perhaps so obvious and ex-
“ plicit.”

It may be proper to inform the reader,
that, besides the general Title, some of the
passages in the Notes, which Mr. Farmer
had only referred to, are here inserted at
length by

THE EDITOR.

REMARKS

"of his name to you. The question is,
"whether you have not incurred some
"blame by allowing the publication to
"go. If it ought to be printed, it can-
"not be without such a narrative as must
"testify, how candidly I ever draw up
"on Mr. Fell. Indeed Mr. Farmer's con-
"viction of his error misrepresents
"Sec. is as heavy a charge against him,
"as any your narrative can contain,
"though not perhaps so obvious and ex-
"plicit."

It may be proper to inform the reader,
that, besides the general Title, some of the
passages in the notes, which Mr. Farmer
had only referred to, are here related at

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THE EDITOR.

REMARKS

REMARKS

ON

MR. FELL'S LETTER TO MR. FARMER.

REMARK I.

MR. FELL, in his LETTER to MR. FARMER, (page 127) says, " In those articles" (viz. his ideas of a miracle, and the arguments he has alledged to shew that miracles are works peculiar to GOD) he " considers Mr. Farmer as approaching " much too near some exceptionable doctrines advanced by LORD BOLINGBROKE and MR. HUME."

Mr. HUME (cited by Mr. Fell, p. 128) says " A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."

nature.” Mr. Farmer is so far from adopting this idea, that, on the contrary, he maintains —That no effect CAN ever be produced CONTRARY to the laws of nature; if thereby be meaned, the natural powers of ALL ORDERS of existence. (*Dissertation on Miracles*, page 6.) And therefore he limited the phrase “the laws of nature,” to the Rules by which the visible world is statedly governed. *Dissertation* page 7*. See also pages 2† and 10.

* “By the laws of nature, I mean, those rules by which the visible world is statedly governed, or the ordinary course of events in it, as fixed and ascertained by observation and experience; and particularly the order of the system to which we belong.” A note is subjoined to illustrate the author’s meaning.

† “Effects produced by the regular operation of the laws of nature, or that are conformable to its established course, are called *natural*. Effects contrary to this settled constitution and course of things I esteem *miraculous*.”

Now

Now there is an essential difference between an effect produced contrary to the natural powers of all orders of existence, (which is an absolute impossibility,) and an effect contrary to the stated rules by which the visible world is statedly governed, which are ever subject to the controul of him who made it.

If Mr. HUME, by “the laws of nature,” meant—the Constitution of nature, the violation of the former seems to imply some change or alteration in the latter. Accordingly *Bolingbroke* (cited by Mr. Fell, page 132) supposes that “the mechanical constitution of the material world is violated, and the natural production of the human understanding altered” by miracles.

But these works, when considered merely as effects contrary to the settled constitution

tion and course of things, carry in them no such absurd implication. For new knowledge may be supernaturally communicated without “altering the natural production” of the human understanding.” And iron may be suspended upon the surface of water, by the divine power, without violating the mechanical constitution of the material world.

REMARK II.

Mr. HUME (cited by Mr. Fell, p. 130) includes in his definition of a miracle (what does not belong to it) THE AUTHOR or CAUSE of it: viz. “a volition of the Deity, or the interposal of some invisible agent.”

In direct opposition to all those who
include,

include, in their definition of miracles, the cause or author of them, Mr. Farmer has shewn at large (*Dissertation on Miracles*, page 15—19) “ that a miraculous effect, “ like every common appearance, has its “ own proper specific nature, distinguish- “ ing it from all others of a different “ kind, separate from the consideration of “ the cause.” These are the very terms used in page 15.

We may convey to others as perfect an idea of a miracle, without taking into consideration the AUTHOR of it, as we can of a watch or a clock, without saying one word about the artist by whom either was made.

Notwithstanding these clear distinctions between Mr. HUME's ideas of miracles and Mr. *Farmer's*, Mr. Fell attempts to
shew

shew that both are one and the same, from page 128 to page 135. And in page 132, he affirms “ that the definition which Mr. Farmer supposes to be his, also was Mr. HUME’s.”

REMARK III.

BOLINGBROKE (cited by Mr. Fell, page 134, 135.) after a multitude of other writers, argues “ from the scale of being “ which is continued downwards *below man*, “ in our system, that the like gradation “ of being is in other systems continued “ *above man*.”

This trite argument Mr. Farmer attempted to invalidate. *Dissertation on Miracles*, page 55. But Mr. Fell, instead of pointing out to the observation of his readers

readers this open opposition against Lord Bolingbroke's opinion, does even on this head draw a parallel between them.

Mr. FARMER thought that, judging by analogy, "the scale of being in this system only proves that the creatures in each system may rise gradually above one another, but without any respect to the rank of man, and without rising gradually above him, or the creatures of other systems;" which is a very different idea from that of Bolingbroke.

On so common a topic there may be some similar expressions in Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Farmer; and yet the sentiments of the one are opposite to those of the other.

Whoever will give himself the trouble

to compare Mr. Fell*, page 137 of his *Letter*, with Mr. Farmer, in his *Dissertation*,

* Mr. FELL.—Lord Bolingbroke's words, (as Mr. Fell quotes them, and from which he accuses Mr. Farmer as borrowing) are as follows: “ We cannot
“ discern a gradation of beings in other planets by the
“ help of telescopes, as we behold such a gradation by
“ the help of microscopes, in our own; but the gra-
“ dation of sense and intelligence in our own,
“ from animal to animal, and of intelligence, princi-
“ pally up to man, as well as the very abrupt man-
“ ner, if I may so say, in which this evidently unfurnish-
“ ed intellectual system stops at the human species,
“ gives great reason to believe, that this gradation is
“ continued upwards in other systems, as we perceive
“ it to be continued downwards in ours. We may
“ well suspect that ours is the lowest, in this respect,
“ of all mundane systems; since the rational is so
“ nearly connected, as it is here, with the irrational;
“ and there may be as much difference between some
“ other creatures of God, (without having recourse
“ to angels and archangels) and man, as there is be-
“ tween a man and an oyster.”——The following
note contains Mr. Fell's quotation from Mr. Farmer,
which he represents as coinciding with Bolingbroke,
together

pages 55, 56[†], will see how much his omissions serve to deceive his readers.

together with the words which Mr. Fell has omitted, which are those distinguished by *italics*, and included in brackets [].

†Mr. FARMER.—“ We are far from denying, that there are in the universe, beings of a higher order than mankind, such as surpass us far, both in natural and moral excellencies. [*All that we here undertake to shew is, that reason is so far from clearly informing us of the power of any superior beings, besides GOD, to work miracles, that the best arguments it can employ, to prove the existence of creatures of a higher order than man, do much more strongly prove that they can act only within a certain limited sphere We allow, indeed, that the infinite number of living beings with which the earth is stocked, affords ground to conclude that the other regions of the universe are equally furnished with inhabitants, adapted to their respective situations.*] We may allow farther, that the gradation of being from lower to higher, which we observe in *our* system, furnishes a proof that the like gradation obtains in *other* systems, and that their inhabitants differ from one another in degrees of excellence, and rise one above another in

REMARK IV.

Mr. FEIL, (page 142) says, " Lord Bo-
" lingbroke supposes intellectual beings in

order. [*But whether they rise above us in perfection, the argument from analogy alone, as I apprehend, cannot determine. For that only enables us to judge, by God's manner of acting in one case, how he will act in another; and of what we do not see and know of his ways by what we do. But all that we observe in the system to which we belong, is an innumerable variety, and a gradation of beings.*] By the rule of analogy, therefore, some similar economy may take place in other systems, and they may contain numberless orders of creatures, rising one above another, till we come to the highest of them. Beyond this, the argument from analogy will not carry us," — [*"supposing it to carry us so far . . . Let us however suppose that the scale of being in our planet is a conclusive proof that there are, in the universe, creatures as much superior to man, as man is to the meanest reptile, still the same kind of reasoning proves . . . that they have a certain limited sphere of action appointed them by God,"*] &c. &c.

“ other mundane systems, to be corporeal as
“ well as in our own.” And then tells Mr.
Farmer—“ and on this very idea is grounded
“ all that you say of their incapacity to act
“ beyond their proper sphere, and their con-
“ sequent inability to produce any effects on
“ this earthly globe.”

Mr. Fell has not referred to the place in
Mr. Farmer's writings on which he grounded
this assertion ; and for a good reason, be-
cause no such place can be found in them.

I will fairly state what Mr. Farmer has
said on this subject. Having shewn “ that
“ the same arguments which prove the ex-
“ istence of superior created intelligences, do

It will appear to the attentive and impartial reader,
that wherein there is a coincidence of expression be-
tween Mr. Farmer and Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Far-
mer intended not to *adopt* but to *answer* his mode of
reasoning. ED.

“ much more strongly conclude against their
“ acting out of their proper sphere ;” (*Dissert.*
on Mir. page 53—61) he proceeds “ to an-
“ swer the objection from their SPIRITUAL
“ and INVISIBLE NATURE,” urged by Dr.
CLARKE, pages 61, 62, 63, which ob-
jection is briefly this :

“ That were the natural powers of the
“ highest angels no greater than the natural
“ powers of men ; since thereby they would
“ be able to do all that invisibly which a man
“ can do visibly, they would be able to work
“ real miracles.”

For answer to this objection Mr. Farmer
observes, (p. 63, 64.) “ That though the
“ powers of angels may be more noble than
“ man’s, yet they may not have the SAME
“ POWERS that man has. And though their
“ sphere of action may be more exalted than
“ ours, yet they and we may not be appointed
“ to

“ to act in the SAME sphere.” He then observes farther, in pages 64, 65, “ That it does
“ not appear that immaterial created spirits
“ have a native power of moving matter,
“ unless they be first united to a BODY; or
“ that this power is essential to their nature.
“ And therefore, that their being SPIRITS
“ does not prove, (as Dr. *Clarke* supposes)
“ their power of working miracles.”

He farther shews (pages 65, 66, 67,) that
“ the ascribing to spiritual beings the same
“ natural powers with corporeal ones,—
“ powers which are the sole effect of an union
“ with organized systems of matter, was not
“ only an absurd principle, but such as had
“ been abused in Pagan and Popish countries
“ to the worst purposes.”

So that to have spoken the truth and done
Mr. Farmer justice, Mr. Fell should have
said (the very contrary of what he did say,

viz.) “ That Mr. Farmer, like Dr. Clarke,
“ supposes angels to be *spiritual beings*, and on
“ this very idea grounds his answer to that
“ great man ; there being no necessary, nor
“ (so far as reason alone can judge) any pro-
“ bable connexion between their spiritua-
“ lity, and a power of acting upon matter,
“ and working miracles.”

REMARK V.

Various passages from Mr. Farmer's Dissertation, respecting the POWER OF ANGELS, as they are cited by Mr. Fell, necessarily mislead his readers, through these two circumstances : viz.— his not giving notice when he considers the matter on the footing of REASON ALONE, and—under what LIMITATIONS he opposes their power of working miracles.

From

From REASON ALONE we can never prove their having this power, or indeed any power at all, over men. It is only from REVELATION that we learn, that God may commission and employ them to work miracles: a point admitted by Mr. Farmer, *Dissert.* page 148 *. Of this, notice ought to have been

* “We do not however deny, that Christ might employ angels in executing his orders, particularly in working miracles, for they are all *made subject to him*. Nevertheless, it does not appear from the scriptures, that they can perform miracles of themselves, and without an immediate divine commission. On the contrary, according to the scripture account of them, if they bring any messages to men, they first receive them from God; if they controul the course of nature, it is by authority from the Lord of nature; and if they interpose at all in the affairs of our system, it is not as they see fit themselves, but according to the command of God, as ministers of his will, &c. &c.”——It seems utterly astonishing, that any intelligent christian divine should object to such sentiments as these, and should not see that the *contrary* ones tend to set aside the use of miracles, and thus to destroy one grand evidence of divine revelation. ED.

given;

given ; as also of the *limitation* before mentioned.

It is only against the power of angels to work miracles **OF THEMSELVES**, and without an immediate divine commission that he argues. Nevertheless Mr. Fell, instead of properly holding this up to view, roundly affirms, (page 153) “ that Mr. Farmer labours to prove, that no miraculous event “ could ever happen without the **IMMEDIATE AGENCY OF GOD.**”

It was to no purpose that, in the very section to which Mr. Fell refers, the point to be proved is stated differently, page 89— “ that miracles are never performed without the immediate agency, **OR ORDER** of God.” The same thing had been more fully expressed, page 50.—“ They are always to be “ ascribed to a divine interposition ; by which “ I mean, that they are never wrought but “ either

“ either by God himself, OR BY SUCH OTHER
“ BEINGS AS HE COMMISSIONS to perform
“ them.”—“Now whether God works the mi-
“ racles himself alone, or whether he enables
“ and commissions OTHERS TO WORK THEM,
“ there is equally a divine interposition.”

REMARK VI.

The reasoning employed by Mr. Farmer, against the liberty of angels to work miracles, without the order of God, does not “conclude against a PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE,” as Mr. Fell supposes, page 153. For God may exercise such a providence by the instrumentality of angels, as Mr. Farmer admits, *Dissert.* page 150, in the note. “On the
“ other hand it may be alledged, That the
“ sacred writers seem to have thought, that
“ God administered *a particular providence* by
“ the

“ the instrumentality of his angels; and con-
 “ frequently in describing the effects of a SPE-
 “ CIAL DIVINE INTERPOSITION, would very
 “ naturally mention the agency of those mi-
 “ nistering spirits, much in the same manner
 “ as is done in the passages here cited,” (viz.
 with respect to the elements, &c.)

On the authority of revelation he con-
 ceives of angels * as “ *ministering spirits*,”
 which is the view given of them, *Heb. i. 14.*
 where they are said to be “ SENT FORTH to
 “ *minister for them who should be heirs of sal-*
 “ *vation.*” Nor can any one prove (whatever
 Bolingbroke, cited by Mr. Fell, page 154,
 &c. may pretend,) That particular provi-
 dences are miracles, or contrary to the stated
 and established rules of the divine govern-
 ment.

* See the passage as quoted above, Note, page 89.

REMARK VII.

Some of the topics urged by BOLINGBROKE and HUME against ALL miracles, Mr. Farmer has wrested out of their hands, and employed for a very different purpose ; namely, to prove the falsehood of PAGAN and POPISH miracles, and all such miracles as could not not fitly be referred to GOD. *Dissert. page 71, et seq.**

* [“ If *evil spirits* do not work miracles *at present*, why should we believe they ever have?] Indeed, our not having *seen* any miracles ourselves, is a sufficient reason for rejecting those that are *reported* by others ; *unless it can be shewn* that they were expedient to answer some extraordinary purposes of divine providence ; or that they are attended by an *evidence of their certainty*, superior to the natural presumption of their falsehood, and to the proofs which satisfy us with regard to the common events of life. [But this is far from being the case, with regard to the generality of those miracles

Nevertheless Mr. Fell, by mutilations, and additions, endeavours to persuade his readers, and has actually persuaded strangers to the *Dissertation*, that Mr. Farmer argues against ALL MIRACLES, as *Hume* professedly does. See Mr. Fell's Letter, pages 147, 153, and more especially the last paragraph in page 149. Nay he asserts, in express terms, page 145, "You," (meaning Mr. Farmer) "oblige us with a string of arguments very much in the manner of Mr. Hume,

which are related in *history*. Amongst them all, we shall find none which on any account deserve credit, excepting such as in their nature, intention and circumstances, are worthy of God; and which, therefore, allowing their reality, may reasonably be supposed to have him for their author. OF THIS KIND ARE THE MIRACLES OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS."—Mr. Fell has quoted part of the above paragraph from Mr. Farmer, but the first and last passages included in [] he has thought proper to leave out.

“ AGAINST

“ AGAINST THE REALITY OF ALL MIRA-
“ CLES WHATEVER *.”

* Candour may require it to be suggested here, that Mr. Fell's words might possibly be construed as meaning, —not that he charged Mr. Farmer with arguing “against ALL miracles whatever,” but with adopting such arguments as Mr. *Hume* had made use of when HE was writing against all miracles. And yet the Critical Reviewers understood Mr. Fell's words in the sense Mr. Farmer did, as other readers may naturally do. Nor is it more extraordinary, that a man so much under the influence of prejudice and passion, should charge Mr. Farmer with infidel principles, than that he should represent his tutor, Dr. Doddridge, as “an enthusiastical Soci-
“ cinian,” or exhibit one of the Doctor's warmest admirers, in a discourse from the pulpit, in as obnoxious a light, on account of a certain publication, in which he had not the smallest concern—a circumstance which should not now have been mentioned, had not an injurious impression been thereby made on some honest minds, which is yet scarcely worn off, and which, after the fullest conviction of the falsehood, he refused to take the proper means of correcting.

To this it is answered,

FIRST, that in the several arguments urged by Mr. Farmer, in page 70—88, against “such miracles as cannot fitly be ascribed to GOD,” it is not even *possible* for any one not to see, that it is against miracles of THIS DESCRIPTION ONLY.

Mr. Fell, for instance, in page 149, cites Mr. Farmer as saying—“that if most of “these miracles,” (viz. those before spoken of) “are allowed to be mere effects of “human fraud, WHY NOT ALL?” No man can doubt what THOSE MIRACLES were, of which Mr. Farmer is speaking, *Dissert.* page 76, and that they were “such ONLY “as could not have GOD for their author.”

Where there is any similarity of expression between Mr. Hume and Mr. Farmer (which could scarcely be avoided when he is arguing
from

from the same topics) there is a great difference of sentiment. It would be easy here to descend into particulars.

SECONDLY. What farther renders it impossible that any one should mistake Mr. Farmer's design is,—his having pointed out at large, and in many particulars, the great difference there is between the miracles which he rejects, and those of SCRIPTURE. His words are as follows. “The
 “ numerous frauds of every kind which
 “ have obtained in the world, are a ground
 “ of caution, not of universal scepticism.
 “ Though many miracles have been forged,
 “ it will not from thence follow that NO
 “ REAL miracles have been performed.
 “ Nay, how can we account for a practice
 “ so universal of forging miracles, for the
 “ support of *false* religions, if on some occasions they had not actually been wrought
 “ for

“ for the confirmation of a TRUE one * . . .
 “ It would be unreasonable, either to re-
 “ ceive or reject all [accounts of] miracles
 “ alike; in case there be a just distinction
 “ between some and others. Now the MI-
 “ RACLES OF SCRIPTURE *are more credible*
 “ *in their own nature than ANY OTHERS,*
 “ being performed for ends of the highest
 “ importance, such as are suitable to the
 “ character of an infinitely perfect being,
 “ and which could not be accomplished in
 “ any other method. THEIR TRUTH IS
 “ CONFIRMED BY WITNESSES OF THE MOST
 “ UNSUSPECTED CREDIT; by the public
 “ revolutions and events which they pro-
 “ duced (such as the conversion of the
 “ world to the Christian faith †) and which

* Dr. Middleton's Pref. Disc. to a Letter from Rome,
 page 86—88.

† On this passage Mr. Farmer has the following note:
 “ The miracles of CHRISTIANITY confirmed a doctrine
 “ cannot

“ cannot possibly be accounted for but upon
“ the supposition of their TRUTH: by the
“ clear prophecies delivered by the authors
“ of these works, of the completion of
“ which distant ages are witnesses; and by
“ a variety of other arguments peculiar to
“ THESE miracles, and which serve to de-
“ tect and expose the falsehood of ALL
“ OTHERS. Those seem to me but ill to
“ consult the credit of the GOSPEL MIRA-
“ CLES, who place them on a level with
“ gross impostures, instead of pointing out
“ the WIDE DIFFERENCE *between them*; and
“ who have no other way of supporting the
“ Christian faith, than by countenancing
“ lies and popular errors, which in all ages
“ has created the strongest prejudice against

“ contrary to men's strongest prejudices, and could not
“ be believed without danger; OTHER miracles, for
“ the most part, cannot be rejected without danger, and
“ are designed to establish popular and profitable errors.”

“ it, and given occasion to boundless sus-
“ picions.”

Mr. Fell takes no notice of this passage, though in page 149—151, he cites the page which immediately precedes, and that which follows it. Nay, in page 151, he has given an extract from the 77th page of the *Dissertation*, and that extract is the introduction to the account Mr. Farmer gives of the circumstances which *distinguish the miracles of SCRIPTURE from ALL OTHERS*. Had he not stopped short in the middle of the paragraph, what would his readers have thought of his attempt to class Mr. Farmer with Mr. HUME and LORD BOLINGBROKE? Had it happened otherwise, he had undone all.

I do not blame the REVIEWER of Mr. Fell's Letter (see the CRITICAL REVIEW for November, 1785, page 383) for “ not seeing the disagreement between Mr. Hume's
“ idea

“ idea on the subject of a miracle, and Mr. Farmer’s,” as he relied on Mr. Fell’s account of the latter; nor do I wonder at his calling upon Mr. Farmer “ to point out the exceptions in favour of the miracles of HOLY WRIT *,” as Mr. Fell concealed its being already done.

* The writer of the article in the CRITICAL REVIEW, above referred to, respecting Mr. *Fell's Letter to Mr. Farmer*, after giving an account of that work, expresses his surprise, that Mr. Farmer should not have pointed out the difference which there is, in his idea, between the miracles of the *Gospel*, and those of the *Romish Church*, expressing also a wish that he would do it in some future work. Mr. Farmer was extremely hurt by such a passage in so respectable a journal, being calculated to convey a very unfavourable idea of his writings to many who had not read them; and therefore he wished to inform the conductors of this Review, in order that they might do him the justice of informing their readers, “ That what was mentioned as so desirable to be done, he actually HAD DONE already.”—Mr. Farmer’s sight being at that time defective, he requested a friend to convey this information to the Reviewers; which ac-

REMARK VIII.

I might point out other exceptionable things in Mr. Fell's Letter; but passing them over, I shall only take notice that he denies (in page 162) that he ever charged Mr. Farmer "with sinister motives, and disguised infidelity." Mr. Farmer was not singular in putting this construction upon some passages in his *Demoniacs*. And to cordingly he readily did, in very few words; merely stating the FACT, and referring to the page. Mr. Fell, by a singular circumstance, coming at the knowledge of the person who performed this act of friendship for Mr. Farmer, conceived of him as an enemy to himself; and several years afterwards, when a fresh occasion offered, wrote him a very illiberal letter on the subject, which sufficiently explained other parts of his conduct towards the same person, which had hitherto appeared unaccountable, to which reference was made above. See page 70, and 95, note.

my apprehension, Mr. Fell has endeavoured to fix the charge of INFIDELITY upon Mr. Farmer, in the very letter in which he denies his ever having advanced it. Why otherwise has he so grossly misrepresented him as arguing (like Mr. Hume and Lord Bolingbroke) against ALL MIRACLES WHATEVER?

Mr. Fell indeed says (page 164) "I have
" no doubt in my own mind that LORD BO-
" LINGBROKE really BELIEVED THE GOS-
" PEL to contain a revelation from GOD."
On the other hand, it is self-evident, that no man can believe the gospel to contain a revelation from God, who argues against ALL MIRACLES. Whoever denies the resurrection of Christ, must regard the gospel as a fable.

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A
FRAGMENT
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MR. FARMER'S MANUSCRIPT TREATISE
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HISTORY OF BALAAM.

EXTRACTED

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TO THE READER.

IT was mentioned in the preceding account of Mr. Farmer's writings, that among his MSS. which were destroyed, was one completely ready for the press, on the case of the prophet BALAAM, and that the late MICHAEL DODSON, Esq. among others who had been favoured with the reading of it, much lamented its destruction. A literary correspondent, on the perusal of these Memoirs, informed the compiler that this learned gentleman had made some extracts from that performance, which he thought likely to be among his papers. Being anxious, if possible, to procure at least an outline of this curious piece, application was made to Mrs. Dodson, by respectable friends, who felt the same desire, and it happily proved successful. Having taken the trouble to search the numerous papers of the deceased, she at length found one superscribed *Extracts from Mr. Farmer on the case of Balaam*, which she very obligingly transmitted to the editor, with permission to

to transcribe it for the purpose he had in view.

Though this paper does not fully answer the expectation raised concerning it, respecting Mr. Farmer's interpretation of *Balaam's ass speaking*, some expressions in it confirm the supposition grounded upon the author's other writings, that he considered the whole scene, like that of Christ's temptation by the devil, as VISIONARY.

The hypothesis itself certainly is not a novel one, "Maimonides and others," says Bishop Newton, "have conceived that the matter was transacted in a VISION. And it must be confessed," says he, "that many things in the writings of the prophets are spoken of as real transactions, which were only visionary; and these visions made as strong impressions upon the minds of the prophets as realities*." By this it should seem that this learned writer favoured that hypothesis.—The story, as understood literally, appears so marvellous, that it has not only been the jest of infidels, but a stumbling-block to believers. PHILO,

* NEWTON on Prophecy, Vol. I. p. 118.

therefore,

therefore, the learned Jew, in his Life of Moses, where he mentions the story of Balaam, leaves out the circumstance of the ass speaking, to avoid offence to his Gentile readers, though similar prodigies were related in their writings *.

Though it may be easier to understand this affair as visionary than as literal, it might require all Mr. Farmer's learning and ingenuity to reconcile the scripture narrative to such an interpretation; and therefore it is ever to be lamented, that such a work should not have been given to the public, for which he had proved himself to be peculiarly qualified by another of the same kind, viz. his "Inquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness," in which elaborate and ingenious performance, he has been allowed, by most learned and judicious readers,

* GROTIUS, who understood this story literally, has the following note. "Hæc omnia Maimonides facta putat in visione; ut Gen. xxxii. 24. Jos. v. 13, 14. Neque tamen similibus portentorum desunt historiæ, AGNUS locutus Bocchoride in Egypto regnante apud Eusebium, Bos locutus apud Livium sæpè, et apud Eusebium. Meminere et Plinius, Polybius, Plutarchus."

to have fully established the grand principles on which his hypothesis of a **DIVINE VISION** is erected; particularly by a reference to the scenes described by Ezekiel and other prophets, which could not possibly be real ones, though the language seems to represent them as such, and which are generally allowed to have been merely visionary. On the same principles it may easily be imagined, that Mr. Farmer would ingeniously interpret this difficult part of the Old Testament history, which some have thought an interpolation, though the apostle Peter considered it as genuine. See *2 Pet. ii. 16.* where he mentions “the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice to rebuke the madness of the prophet.”

Though our learned author’s particular explication of this whole narrative is irrecoverably lost, the following extracts from his illustrations of Balaam’s truly beautiful and sublime **PREDICTIONS**, will be esteemed precious relics, which it was singularly fortunate to have preserved.

They are printed exactly according to Mr. Dodson’s copy, but it was thought needful, in order to the reader’s discerning
the

the propriety of the author's comment, to insert the TEXT at length, as he himself would most probably have done, on the opposite page. Besides Mr. Farmer's notes and references, there are a few others which appear to have been added by Mr. Dodson, and which are distinguished, where it could be done, by the letter D. Some of the quotations the editor has inserted at length, which are included in [brackets;] the principal of which are those from *Peters on Job*, for the sake of such readers as may not be possessed of that excellent work. A few other small insertions of the editor, are in like manner distinguished, or by different marks of reference. The ADDENDA at the close, it is presumed, will require no apology.

If the publication of this Fragment (for such only can it be called) of our learned author, should induce any reader who is equal to such an undertaking, thoroughly to investigate the subject, and to establish Mr. Farmer's hypothesis, or any other, both the editor and the public will have peculiar cause for satisfaction, that the following paper was rescued from oblivion.

The PROPHECIES of BALAAM as recorded in the Book of NUMBERS, according to the common translation.

NUMB. XXIII. 4—10.

And God met Balaam : and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.

5. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

7. And he took up his parable ^a and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come curse me ^b Jacob, and come defy ^c Israel.

8. How shall I curse whom GOD hath not cursed ? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied ?

9. For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo the

^a That is, was transported with a prophetic spirit. See DURELL on Job, p. 81. D.—[“ Le Clerc translates “ the word *figuratam orationem*. Thereby is meant, a “ weighty and solemn speech, delivered in figurative “ and majestic language. Such remarkably are the prophecies of Balaam. See *Lowth's Praelect.*” Newton on Proph. Vol. I. p. 122.]

^b [i. e. curse for me.]

^c Or execrate. *Lowth.*]

EXTRACTS from MR. FARMER'S MS.

NUMB. XXIII. 7—10.

It pleased God to manifest himself to Balaam, but in a manner very different from what he wished or expected. When he was pleading the number and value of the sacrifices he had offered to render him and the other gods propitious, Jehovah “put a word into his mouth,” and at his return to Balak he broke out, under an immediate divine impulse, into the following weighty and pathetic speech, which he pronounced with a high voice :

“Of all the persons in the East, famous for the magic art^a, I was singled out as the ablest to blast the army of the Israelites. But how impossible is it, by any execration, to bring evil upon a people who are under the protection of God, even Jehovah ! From the eminence on which I now stand, I command a view of their encampment : a most magnificent prospect ! And what

^a On the character and pretensions of the Magicians. See Essay on Miracles, p. 254—287.

Of the ancient evocation of Gods, see 1 Kennicott. 158, &c. Law, 93—95.

people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

10. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? — Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

* The eminently learned MICHAELIS (in his *Syntagma Commentationum*, p. 107,) supposes that Balaam's wish has a reference to a future state. See PETERS on Job, p. 285.

[The passage is as follows. "The word literally denotes, an after time or state; a state that begins again after some remarkable period. Thus the remaining part of Job's life, after his recovery from his affliction, is called his *ACHERITH* (ch. xlii. 2.) And as men survive, as it were, in their posterity, this imaginary existence too is called their *ACHERITH*. — But the word is never used in a more natural or proper sense, than when applied to express a future state after death; which is evidently the sense wherein it ought to be understood in this parable of BALAAM. So likewise *Psalms* xxxvii. 37. whence the wish of Balaam might receive farther illustration."]

TAYLOR

is truly astonishing, these people are perfectly separated from all others by their religion and laws. They bear no resemblance to, and will never be incorporated with, any of the surrounding nations.—What a countless host! It is impossible to reckon up the number contained in only one of those four camps^f into which they are divided.—Oh! that I might die the death of the righteous, such as the Israelites are! May I never come to an untimely end^g for attempting to curse a people so signally favoured by heaven!”

TAYLOR understands it of his posterity (*Scheme*, page 246.) May my posterity be like his!—In the LXX the word is σπέρμα. Compare *Numb.* xxiv. 20. This I take to be the true sense. D. [See LOWTH. *Prælect.* xiv. Greg. *Transf.* Note S. H.]

^f See the second chapter of Numbers, *passim*.

^g From chap. xxxi. 10. it appears that Balaam was slain by the Israelites; and in the passage before us the prophetic spirit seems to have intimated to him that he would come to an untimely end. See Grotius and Le Clerc in loc.

NUMB. XXIII. 18—22.

18. And he took up his parable and said, rise up Balak and hear: hearken unto me thou son of Zippor.

19. God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall not he do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

20. Behold I have received *commandment* to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

22. GOD brought them out of Egypt. Heⁿ hath as it were, the strength of an unicorn.

ⁿ This, by a change of person, is most commonly understood of ISRAEL. Mr. Farmer refers it to EGYPT, the immediate antecedent, supposing the idea to be,—since the almighty had delivered this people from that most powerful kingdom, the king of Moab &c. would in vain expect to subdue them. ED.

NUMB.

Balaam again retired from the king to consult Jehovah, who was pleased, while the son of Beor was in this recess, to inspire him with the following answer, to which the strictest attention of Balak was demanded.

“ The God of Israel (the only being in the universe who can properly be stiled God) is not like the heathen deities, of human origin, not subject to the variable passions of mankind. His decrees are never reversed, nor can the execution of them be defeated. Consider it well: I have received a commission, and supernatural inspiration to bless the Israelites. God hath blessed them, and it is impossible for me to engage him to change his purpose. They keep free from idolatry, and those enormous vices which attend it; and for this reason Jehovah their God is with them; and while they preserve their allegiance to him, he will render them victorious and triumphant. If the king of Moab and the princes of Midian entertain any doubt of it, let them take warning by those displays of God's power and justice by which he accomplished their deliverance

NUMB. XXIII. 23, 24.

23. Surely *there is* no enchantment against Jacob, neither *is there* any divination against Israel. According to this timeⁱ, it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, “What hath God wrought?”

24. Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion. He shall not lie down until he cut off the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

ⁱ *According to this time*—“whenever the occasion requires.”] Compare the LXX, where *κατα καιρον* answers to the Hebrew word which we render “according to this time,” and which properly denotes “according to the season or the occasion.”—Compare Isaiah lx. 22. [A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.]

See Bishop PEARCE, Vol. II. p. 381. Bos. Prolog. to LXX on Judges xxi. 22. LINDSEY'S Sequel, p. 321.

out of Egypt, which far surpasseth all other states and kingdoms.

“ It is in vain for you to have recourse to enchantments and divinations against the Israelites: Whensoever the occasionⁱ requires them, the appearances of God in their favour will be such as to strike the world with the greatest astonishment. Consider well what I now foretel you: Every hostile attack upon them will be in the issue as fatal to the aggressors as it would be to a beast of the forest to rouse a fierce lion, by which he would be torn and devoured in a moment.”

NUMB. XXIV. 3—24.

While Balaam was surveying the camp of Israel [ver. 2^{*}] and the king and princes were expecting what he would deliver, the spirit of God came upon him, under whose immediate inspiration and uncontrollable influence he expressed himself greatly to his own mortification, to the following effect¹.

^{*} [“ And Balaam lift up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes, &c.]

¹ LOWTH'S Prælectiones xx. [See the passage referred to, quoted at length in the *addenda*.]

NUMB. XXIV. 3—6.

3. And he took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said,—

4. He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, [not in the *Heb.*] but having his eyes open^m.

5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

6. As the valleysⁿ are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as the trees

^m The word כָּשָׁה is only used here and in *Lam.* iii. 8. where it signifies to *shut*. See Newton on *Proph.* I. 129. Ed.

ⁿ See PETERS on Job, p. 447. ["There is another word in this sentence (*Job* xxviii. 4.) which may demand to have its meaning fixed, I mean NACHAL.—It sometimes signifies *a vale*, but oftener a torrent, or tide of spreading waters, which has somewhat of the same appearance. *They are spread forth as the valleys* (or rather as the floods of water) says Balaam, of the tents of Israel, as they overspread the plains of Moab, *Numb.* xxiv. 6. And, without doubt, the regular encampment of 600,000 fighting men, together with their families and followers, amounting in all, as commonly computed, to three millions, must needs make a fine appearance, and extend itself very wide."]

of

“ Attend, O king of Moab and princes of Midian, to what Balaam is divinely commissioned to speak to you: to what that man is divinely commissioned to speak, who, while he was looking upon the Israelites with a desire to curse them, found his eyes (in effect) shut^m; having lost all perception of external objects. Give strict attention to what he is divinely commissioned to reveal, who *hears God speaking to him and* ° sees a vision and representation of the Almighty, and under his present TRANCE or ECSTASY hath as full and perfect a view of those scenes which are presented to his mind, as if they were what to him they appear to be, the objects of corporeal sight. ^p

“ How inexpressibly delightful is the view which I now have of the camp of Israel! The fertility and beauty of a well-watered valley,

° This clause *in italic* not in the Samaritan. D.

^p See Inquiry on Christ's Temptation, third edit. p. 80. and p. 95. [Where the author considers the distinction which the scripture makes between a vision and a trance or ecstasy, referring to the above passage respecting Balaam.] JORTIN's Dissert. p. 190, &c.

or

of lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.

7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his feed shall be as many waters^q, and his king shall be higher than Agag,^r and his kingdom shall be exalted.

8. GOD brought him forth out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations *which are* his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.

9. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesteth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

^q Read יוֹל אוֹל אֶרֶם מִלִּין or מִן עֵצוֹ וְזֶרַע בְּעַמִּים רַבִּים agreeably to the LXX ἐξελευσεται ανθρωπος εκ της σπερματος αυτης και κυριευσει εθνων πολλων. [*A man shall come forth of his seed, who shall rule over many nations.*] The Chal. Par. Onk. and Jer. Targ. agree nearly with LXX.—It is more probable that יע (which in Isaiah xi. 1. is rendered as here ἐξελευσεται) is the true reading, D.

^r AGAG was the general name of the kings of the Amalekites (1 Kings xvi. 8.) who were the most powerful people in those parts. They were subdued by Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 8.

17. I shall

or garden; the fragrancy of those aloes which perfume the air with their odours, and the majestic appearance of the loftiest cedars, are but imperfect representations of the flourishing condition of these descendants of Jacob. A people whom God will bless with a numerous posterity, and whose princes shall excel those whose power you continually celebrate. God, who delivered them out of Egypt, that potent kingdom, will raise them to great pre-eminence, and enable them utterly to destroy every hostile nation. They will live without any fear of being molested by enemies; and it would be as dangerous to disturb them, as for a weaker beast to rouse a lion out of his den. Blessed is (*or be*) he that blesteth thee, and cursed is (*or be*) he that curseth thee."

Asserting, as he had done before [v. 15, 16.] his own immediate inspiration by the Most High, by the only true God, in the way of VISION (in which things remote are represented as near, and things future as if they were present) Balaam added — "I see

17. I shall see him,^{*} but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a star[†] out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

18. And Edom shall be a possession. Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly.

19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations, but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

21. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

22. Nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted until Ashur shall carry thee away captive.

^{*} DAVID and other kings who subdued Moab. See Jeffery, p. 151. [See 2 Sam. viii. 2. &c.]

[†] [Some refer this ultimately to the Messiah. See Bp. Newton and Peters on Job.]

see, though you are not to expect him but in an age remote from the present, an illustrious prince arising in Israel, who will subdue the Moabites, and destroy all the posterity of Seth. The Israelites inspired by Heaven with valour, will prove victorious over all their enemies. They will take possession of the country of the Edomites, not excepting Seir, and all those places and cities which are most strongly fortified by nature and art."

When he looked on the descendants of Amalek, one of the most ancient and eminent of all the neighbouring nations, he resumed his prophetic speech, and foretold their entire destruction—"because without any provocation, they were the first to attack the people of Jehovah in their travels."

He then looked on the Kenites, who were mingled with the people of Midian and Amalek, and foretold—"That even their mountains and rocks, though deemed inaccessible, would not prevent them from being gradually wasted by the power of the Israelites, till at last they should be carried away into captivity by the Assyrian monarchs."

NUMB. xxiv. 23, 24.

23. And he took up his parable and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?

24. And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber*, and he also shall perish for ever.

* The Jews are commonly supposed to have been called *Hebrews* from *Eber*, a descendant of Shem, who is styled, *Gen. x. 21.* 'the father of the children of Eber,' who was one of the ancestors of Abraham, to whom, on that account, this name has been thought to be given, *Gen. xiv. 13.* And some commentators suppose, as Mr. Farmer seems to have done, that the above prediction concerning *Eber*, refers to the oppression of the *Hebrew nation*, and their final destruction by the Romans. The LXX render the word 'Εβραῖος. But it appears highly improbable that Balaam, who was commissioned to *bleſs* this people instead of *curſing* them, as he was hired to do, and who had reluctantly foretold their great prosperity and their superiority to all their enemies, should at this very time, in the hearing of Balak, utter a prediction of their total ruin. The word עבר has a signification more consistent with the general design of Balaam's prophecies, and more honourable to the Israelites. It properly denotes *from beyond*, or *the other side*, viz. of a river; and was given to Abraham by the Canaanites, when he sojourned among them, with reference to this circumstance, in the passage above referred to: *And there came one that had escaped, and told Abraham the HEBREW: עבר, the man from beyond the river, viz. the Euphrates, which is always meant by that term. According to the LXX and Aquila translate it πέρατης. The passage, therefore, in this prediction of Balaam, concerning the destruction of EBER, may naturally be understood,*

His views were now carried forward to still more distant periods, and he was oppressed with the prospect of the desolation occasioned by the great empires of the world. It was not without a deep sigh that he uttered the following prediction. "How difficult will it be to escape with life when the Assyrian will subdue so many nations! But they also in their turn shall suffer the vengeance of heaven. The posterity of Chittim, who peopled Greece and Italy, shall overthrow the Assyrian monarchy, after having been transferred to the Persians. They shall also utterly destroy the Hebrews* themselves. Afterwards Chittim shall perish for ever; the empire first of the Greeks, then of the Romans, shall be entirely destroyed. So universal is the providence, and so impartial is the justice of God, who conducts the revolutions of the world."

stood, not of the *Hebrews*, or Israelites, but of those Eastern nations which were at enmity with them, which lay beyond the river Euphrates, still called by the same name which Abraham had received for the like reason. Thus it was understood by GROTIUS, whose note upon the passage is as follows: (ED.)

VASTABUNTQUE HEBRÆOS עַבְרֵי עוֹס qui transflumen sunt significat. Flumen Euphratem intellige. Etiam Euphratem transgredientur Macedonum sive Græcorum arma. Et hoc ad Alexandrum pertinere nemo non videt.

ADDENDA.

MR. DODSON, on the back of his MS. has made many additional remarks and references, but few of which are sufficiently distinct to admit of being transcribed, and properly inserted. The following, though they do not relate to the foregoing passages, may be thought worthy of preserving here.

NUMB. XXII. 18.—*The Lord MY GOD.*

It seems not likely that Balaam should call Jehovah HIS God. But Samar. and Heb. have אלהי, except that Heb. MS. No. 80, omits the word. (It should perhaps be אלהים) See Kennicott's Rem. p. 194. Diff. Sect. 26. 89. The LXX read Θεὸς τῶν ὀνείρων.

In NUMB. xxiii. 3. יקרא should be יקרא as in Samar. and in v. 15, אקרא should be אקרא, as in Samar. and 1 Heb. MS. See More. Kennicott. Rem. p. 40. 380.

In

In another place, reference is made to Theol. Repos. iv. 34. 97. 108.

As in the preceding illustrations of Balaam's prophecies several references are made to Bishop LOWTH'S PRÆLECTIONES, it may not be amiss to add some quotations from that learned and elegant work, containing the author's high encomium of these predictions, and his poetical translation of one of them with an English version.

LECT. IV.—“ To which we may add, the prophecies of Balaam, the Mesopotamian, pronounced also in the parabolic style, as appears from the extreme neatness of the composition, the metrical and parallel sentences, the sublimity of the language and sentiment, and the uncommon elegance of the verse.

LECT. XVIII.—“ In the Mosaic history I have already quoted, as the fairest examples of the Hebrew poetry, the imprecations of Noah, the blessing of Jacob, and the predictions of Balaam: than all which (particularly those of Balaam) I do not know
K that

that the whole extent of the prophetic writings could afford more pertinent instances. ——— Among the prophecies of Balaam, I will also venture to class that most elegant poem, which is rescued from oblivion by the prophet MICAH, and which, in matter and diction, in the structure, form, and character of the composition, so admirably agrees with the other monuments of his fame, that it evidently appears to be a citation from the answer of Balaam to the king of Moab*.

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, &c.

LECT. XX. “ Among the shorter prophecies, I need only mention those of Balaam, each of which is possessed of a cer-

* “ See *Micah* vi. 6—8. and the late Bishop BUTLER’s Sermon on the character of Balaam.” [In the discourse here referred to, contained in the Volume of Sermons at the Rolls Chapel, the author has this strange position, p. 124, “ The supposition of his (Balaam’s) “ being under a supernatural restraint, is a mere fiction “ of *Philo*: he is plainly represented to be under no “ other force or restraint than the Fear of GOD.”—How any one, possessing the fear of God could undertake the business for which Balak sent for him, is utterly incredible. That he was under a divine restraint, as well as a divine impulse, which Mr. Farmer supposes, is evident upon the face of the narrative.]

tain

tain accuracy of arrangement and symmetry of form: they open with an elegant exordium, they proceed with a methodical continuation of the subject, and are wound up with a full and graceful conclusion."

"That I may not conclude this lecture without exhibiting the form of some prophetic poem complete in all its parts, I have selected one of the prophecies of Balaam, which have more than once deservedly attracted our attention: for indeed I do not know that the whole scope of the Hebrew poetry contains any thing more exquisite or perfect. This which is at present under our consideration, abounds in gay and splendid imagery, copied immediately from the tablet of nature; and is chiefly conspicuous for the glowing elegance of the style, and the form and diversity of the figures. Though every attempt to display the beauties of the Hebrew imagery in the poetry of another language must fall greatly short of the design, it will yet give a little variety to our studies, to intersperse them occasionally with modern verse. On these occasions, as

indeed on every other, I must rely upon the candour of this audience to accept in good part the willing tribute of my faint endeavours*.”

NUM. XXIV. 5—9.

Tuis, Jacobe, quantus est castris decor !

Tuifque signis, Israel !

Ut rigua vallis fertilem pandens finum ;

Horti ut scatentes rivulis ;

Sacris Edenæ costi ut in sylvis virent,

Cedrique propter flumina.

Illi uda multo rore stillant germina,

Fœtusque alunt juges aquæ.

Sancti usque fines promovebit imperi

Rex usque victor hostium.

Illum subactò duxit ab Nilo Deus,

Novis superbum viribus,

Qualis remotis liber in jugis oryx

Fert celsa cœlo cornua.

Vorabit hostes ; ossa franget ; irritas

Lacerabit hastas dentibus.

Ut leo recumbit ; ut læna, decubat ;

Quis audeat laceffere ?

* From Dr. Gregory's accurate and elegant translation.

Quæ quisque tibi precabitur, ferat bona !

Mala quæ precabitur, luat !

Thus translated into English.

In proud array thy tents expand,

O Israel o'er the subject land :

As the broad vales in prospect rise,

As gardens by the waters spread.

As cedars of majestic size,

That shade the sacred fountain's head.

Thy torrents shall the earth o'erflow,

O'erwhelming each obdurate foe.

In vain the mind essays to trace

The glories of thy countless race,

In vain thy king's imperial state

Shall haughty Agag emulate.

His mighty God's protecting hand

Led him from Pharaoh's tyrant land.

Strong as the beast that rules the plain,

What power his fury shall restrain ?

Who dares resist his force shall feel

The nations see, and trembling fly,

Or in th' unequal conflict die,

And glut with blood his thirsty steel.

With aspect keen he mark'd his prey,—
He couch'd—in secret ambush lay,—

Who shall the furious lion dare?
Who shall unmov'd his terrors see?

Blest, who for thee exalts his pray'r,
And curst the wretch who curseth thee!

APPENDIX. No I.

Containing SOME ACCOUNT of the Rev. Mr. HUGH OWEN, drawn up by his Grandson, Mr. HUGH FARMER, in the Year 1775, for the Nonconformist's Memorial, in addition to that published by Dr. Calamy.

“ His character was strongly marked by compassion and charity. The numerous poor in his own neighbourhood, and under his extensive pastoral inspection, he constantly visited and relieved. When in his travels he has met with persons suffering greatly by the severity of the weather, for want of proper clothing, he has spared from his own person (not without some hazard to it) what their pressing necessities seemed to require. At a time when the sweating sickness carried off great numbers,

and the infected were in want of proper assistance, he diligently attended them, and condescended to perform, even for the meanest, any necessary service.

“ With respect to the impression which his unaffected piety and goodness made upon others, the following particulars are remarkable. When the under-sheriff of Merionethshire apprehended him at his own house, in the reign of James II. he readily consented to go with him, and only begged leave first to pray with his family. This he was allowed to do. When he had done, the officer being deeply affected with his devotion, told him, “ He would have nothing now to say to him,” and went away, leaving his prisoner at liberty.

“ He was once confined at Lord Powis's, at Powis castle, but was treated with remarkable kindness during his confinement.

Lord

Lord Powis, though a papist, on hearing him pray, said to his priest, "Surely this is a good christian!" and on his discharge, engaged him to come to Powis castle every Christmas.

"Mr. Owen left behind him a letter of advice to his people, which he stiled his *Last Legacy*, of which the following is the substance. "Beware of worldliness, for I
 "fear lest the world, like a canker, should
 "eat up all the good that is in many, and
 "leave their souls like dry shells. Set
 "yourselves against secret pride, and take
 "care to keep down every proud and high-
 "conceited thought of yourselves upon any
 "account. Set yourselves to practise the
 "great duty of self-denial; yea rejoice in
 "opportunities of humbling yourselves in
 "the very dust, for the sake of Jesus;
 "striving to be forward to forgive, forget
 "and pass by, whatever any body may do
 "against

“ against you ; yea apply yourselves first
“ for peace. Beware of the proud and high
“ temper that says, It is they offended and
“ not I ; they should come to me and not
“ I to them. These are but the effects of
“ pride, and of more love to ourselves than
“ to the Lord Jesus Christ and his ways.”

“ Having given the officers and ancient
members of the church a hint concerning
the prudence and moderation to be used by
them, to prevent disputes about baptism,
he observes, “ That such disputes had occa-
“ sioned a great breach at Wrexham, to the
“ dishonour of God, and the contempt of
“ religion, and that those who had engaged
“ in them had acknowledged to him, that
“ they had lost the presence of God, which
“ they had formerly enjoyed, and that
“ there was a stop put to the work of con-
“ version among them. I press you to this
“ (says he) because it should be the desire

“ and design of every member to encrease
 “ the kingdom of Christ ; to have the image
 “ of Christ, and not their own opinion
 “ stamped upon the souls of men. If I
 “ have the image of Christ stamped on my
 “ soul, I shall be sure to go to heaven ; but
 “ I may enjoy both sorts of baptism, and
 “ go to hell after all.”

“ It may not be amiss to add, that Mr.
 Owen’s amiable character, especially for
 modesty and humility, is spoken of in Wales
 to this day with great applause and veneration ; and that an ancient and worthy clergyman of the church of England, yet living (in 1775) communicated some of the above particulars *.”

* From a late perusal of the life of Mr. James Owen, it does not appear that he was related to Mr. Hugh Owen, as suggested, page 3, or that he was a stated assistant to that venerable man, as Dr. Calamy intimates, but that he was hospitably received and entertained by him in a

This

This account of his venerable *ancestor* shews that Mr. Farmer was not ashamed of time of severe persecution. The following passage, which redounds highly to Mr. Hugh Owen's character, seems worth inserting here.

“ After he [Mr. James Owen] had been kept in that county [viz. at Bodwel, in Caernarvonshire] as a prisoner for about nine months, he was conveyed by night to Bronyclydwr, in Merionydshire, the house of the Rev. Mr. Hugh Owen, a gentleman peculiarly eminent for humility, meekness, great seriousness, and unwearied diligence in his master's service. The great encouragement he had to fix in this country, did but encrease the the persecuting flame, which obliged him to remove. Upon his departure from thence, he writes thus.”—
 “ While I was with Mr. H. Owen, I had a very malignant
 “ fever ; he and some others of the family being ill at
 “ the same time : but it pleased God to restore us both.
 “ I had several opportunities to preach in the country,
 “ which exposed me to the observation of the neighbour-
 “ ing gentlemen, who threatened to issue out warrants
 “ against me.”

“ In November, 1676, he had a call to Swiney, near Oswestrye, in Shropshire,” &c.—No account is given of his return to Bronyclydwr.—In 1699, he had an in-

his

his descent, nor of the principles by which the Nonconformists were distinguished, among whom he was willing that his own name should stand enrolled. It would have been a high gratification to many, as well as to the compiler of these papers, if he could have presented to the public Mr. Farmer's effigies. But he never would consent to sit for his picture. This being the case, the following description of his person may not be unacceptable to those who never saw him.

In height he was something above the middle size, and rather thin than corpu-

vation to Shrewsbury, to assist good old Mr. Tallents, who survived him. It was in this year that Mr. Hugh Owen died, and it is not improbable that, from their former acquaintance, he might be desired to preach his funeral sermon, as is related by Dr. Calamy. See Noncon. Mem. iii. 492, where there is an error of the press, the figure 9 being inverted.

lent ;

lent; well proportioned, and of a genteel figure. His features were regular and handsome. His complexion good, though somewhat dark. His nose and chin were prominent and sharp. On losing his teeth his mouth fell in considerably. His eyes were rather small, and penetrating. Being somewhat near-sighted, they were usually half closed in looking at an object. The combination of his features expressed dignity penetration and keenness, so as to command veneration and respect.

APPENDIX. No. II.

MR. FARMER'S LETTERS.

Mr. FARMER, on his first settlement at Walthamstow, commenced an intimate acquaintance with Mr. ISAAC TOMS, then chaplain in the Family of Sir DANIEL DOLENS, of Hackney, and tutor to his son, preaching only occasionally. When Mr. Toms removed, to take the charge of a congregation at HADLEIGH, in Suffolk, (where he approved himself a most pious, prudent and diligent pastor, till the year 1800, when he died at the age of 90 years) Mr. Farmer maintained an epistolary correspondence with him, to their mutual edification as christian ministers. His son,
Mr.

Mr. S. SAY TOMS, minister at Framlingham, since the foregoing sheets were printed, has communicated to the editor a number of Mr. Farmer's Letters to his worthy father, written at an early period; justly apprehending that a few of them may not improperly accompany the present publication*. They will doubtless be acceptable to many of Mr. Farmer's pious friends, as testimonies to his religious character, and proofs of the seriousness, humility and zeal with which, from the first, he engaged in the work of the christian ministry. The world has chiefly viewed him as the learned divine, and great biblical scholar, here he will appear as the good

* The good sense of those readers who most admire Mr. Farmer's learned publications, will lead them to make due allowance for whatever they may observe in these Letters, inferior to them in point of composition, &c. considering that they were written at a much earlier period, and with all the freedom of private friendship: a circumstance which enhances their value.

man, and the pious pastor, seeking advice from one of the best of ministers, a few years his senior, in order to his usefulness to the souls of his flock: at the same time shewing his readiness, in every possible way, to serve so valuable a friend.

LETTER I.

London, Lawrence Poultney Hill,

DEAR SIR,

January 22, 1744.

I am greatly indebted to you for your kind letter; especially for the advice you give, which I shall endeavour to profit by. I am every day more and more sensible how unfit I am for every part of the ministerial work, so as to be at times oppressed under a sense of my insufficiency. But this is what I never before opened to any but one very particular friend, and now do it to you to engage your prayers. Here, in and near the city, where good breeding has polished away almost all sincerity, it is, generally speaking, impossible to mention defects which we inwardly feel and lament, lest it should be thought a more artful method of procuring praise. But I am encouraged to open my heart to you my dear friend, as you have opened yours to me.

Under my present dejection it has pleased God to honour me with being the instrument (though most unworthy) of the conviction, and I hope saving conversion, of one person. What I learned from her of her case, and which her husband confirmed, was to this effect. She had lived in an entire neglect of God, and even of the outward forms of worship in a great degree. Though she was bred a church-woman, her husband being a dissenter, brought her to our place of worship. It pleased God to fix her attention very much to what she heard, and she began from that time to be very thoughtful; though before, as she informed me, if she ever attempted to think of religion, a thousand vain thoughts crowded in upon her mind at once. Now she relishes nothing but spiritual converse, and I hope from many other marks of conversion, is become a true christian. As such we admitted her to our communion the last sacrament-day. I mention this to you that you may join with me in praising God for this instance of his grace, and in praying that this may be the first fruit of a plentiful harvest.

I rejoice sincerely in the great success with which God honours you. Your zeal justly shames me. I pray God you may daily 'see of the travail of your soul and be satisfied.' I am glad he inclines your heart to undertake the pastoral care of the congregation, and pray that your preparatory inquiries may be guided, and that you may be led more and more into the knowledge of your master's will. But, amidst your other cares, pray do not forget your health. Though as you justly observe, we ought to be willing to sacrifice it when God calls us out to do it, you likewise know, it is a great christian duty to endeavour

deavour to preserve it, when he does not; that we may not shorten our days, and thereby our usefulness. Too great bodily fatigue may occasion that depression of mind you complain of, in some degree, though it is certain good men find a great difference in the frame of their minds at different times. To have those lively views of the favour of God at all times, which we have sometimes, would turn earth into a paradise; and yet we should never be easy without them. This case is particularly considered in Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress, &c." just published. I have not yet read it through: should be glad to know your sentiments of that performance. I shall never communicate any thing you write, that you desire to have concealed.—Shew your forgiveness of my long silence by a speedy answer. I need and desire your advice and prayers; and I most earnestly pray God to crown all your zealous labours with success, and lift upon you the light of his countenance.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

HUGH FARMER.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

London, January 24, 1745.

I received your [manuscript] on “the evil of common swearing*,” which I have read with pleasure, and cannot but think it might be a means of doing good to put so serious a performance into the hands of the common people, who, though they may hear a sermon now and then against profane swearing, have seldom had their consciences addressed in a close awakening manner. I am sorry, however, that you did not make choice of a more proper person to correct it.—When you send this little tract (the more likely to be useful for being small) into the world, I sincerely pray that the blessing of God may accompany it.

Since I wrote to you last, I have had a fever, but have great reason to be thankful to God for recovering me from it; for certainly it must be a great mercy to have more time allowed to improve in our meetness for the heavenly felicity. Yet during my illness it pleased God to revive me with as comfortable a hope of his favour as I ever enjoyed, so that death appeared greatly desirable. It is nothing but the light of God’s countenance that gives a lustre and a sweetness to our brightest days, and this enlightens and cheers us in circumstances of the deepest distress. O! that in every state I might be

* This is one of the tracts given away by the Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor.

blessed

bleſſed with a pleaſing conſciouſneſs of my integrity, and with a reſreſhing aſſurance of the divine favour, joined, as it always ought to be, with a deep and juſt ſenſe of my manifold defects and great unworthineſs. True humility and holy rejoicing are not enemies to each other. —I ſhall be glad to hear from you, and in the mean time pray that all divine bleſſings may be multiplied upon you.

I am, dear Sir,
your very ſincere affectionate friend
and obliged humble ſervant,

H. FARMER.

P. S. I am greatly obliged to you for your bibles — — I propoſe to lay out part of what I can ſpare for charity in ſuch gifts, eſpecially as the bible is the only book I can give amongſt the church people; and indeed they have had almoſt all I have given away, moſt of the diſſenters being provided. One thing lies upon my mind which I ſhould be glad of your advice about. How can a diſſenting miniſter be uſeful to thoſe children whoſe parents go to church, and yet neglect to inſtruct them? Suppoſe the caſe too, that both prejudice and intereſt indiſpoſe them for receiving the benefit that is ſincerely wiſhed them? Theſe points have been your ſtudy, and I pray God they may every day more and more be mine.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

March 12, 1745.

If I were asked which of your letters I liked best, I should be forced to answer, as the Roman orator did, when the same question was put to him with regard to the Orations of Demosthenes, and say “the longest.” Though you forbid me from giving you even just commendations, and I allow this to be a caution fit to be observed in our friendly correspondence when there is not an absolute necessity of departing from it, yet you must give me leave to say that my mind is deeply affected with your kindness in bestowing so much of your time upon me, when you know so well the value of it. I hope, however, that part of your time you spent in endeavouring to administer comfort to me was not altogether lost, with regard to *me*, I mean; for with regard to the person that performs it, you well know, no ‘labour in the Lord *can* be in vain.’

But tell me (my much esteemed friend) if it be not difficult to become quite dead to the present world, and to serve Christ in the ministry with singleness of heart, and without the least mixture of low and improper motives?—The happiest disposition in the world, and at the same time the hardest to be attained, is a willingness to forego esteem and every worldly interest, without hesitation, in order to approve our fidelity to God. Did we perform every action from this motive alone, we
might

might expect the presence and blessing of God, and our hearts would be lifted up into a holy confidence and joy. Oh! when shall I be entirely purged from pride and all worldly affections, that I may be ‘a vessel of honour, and fit for my master’s use!’ Are you got quite above the world,—the best and worst of it?—

I thank God for the great encouragement you meet with in your work, and pray that you may have more seals to your ministry. If you desire, however, to be long serviceable to the Redeemer’s interest, spare your constitution * as much as you can, consistently with your present duty. I know the advice is painful. I find it a great exercise and trial of my own resignation to God, to make myself easy in being lodged in a body that hinders me from many duties I should be glad to perform. I sincerely rejoice in your recovery from your late indisposition, but am grieved that your joy in this and other mercies is embittered by your sorrow on another account. You, Sir, would with great skill, caution your christian friend against suffering himself to be overwhelmed with grief, and direct him to gather strength even from his very infirmities, by improving them as motives to humility, watchfulness, diligence, and humble joy in the grace of God by Jesus Christ.

Tender parents do not use severity towards a dutiful child for such faults as are consistent with his fidelity and affection; especially when he discovers a penitent sense of them. No doubt you have often exhorted others in such a case to think much of the love of God in the Re-

* Which was always very delicate.

deemer; that being effectual at once both to excite a godly sorrow, and to restrain it; nay, to mingle pleasure along with it. And what is more than all, to secure the true end of it: the encrease of our love, zeal, and caution, and an humble dependence upon God.

I cannot but hope and believe that God has suffered this cloud to hang upon your mind, to inspire you with a peculiar sensibility and compassion towards them that are bowed down. I have often heard it observed, that God prepares his servants for eminent services by calling them to pass through such scenes of trial and sorrow, as you describe in your last. But I hope now a bright day is introduced into your soul: it seemed to be even then beginning to dawn.

According to your request, I went to see Mrs. B——, whom I found in a languishing condition of body, and under great dejection of mind.—I went to prayer with her, and conversed as long as her weakness would bear; and I purpose, if possible, to repeat my visit this week. She was deeply affected with your goodness in sending me to her.—With difficulty I prevailed on her to accept of a small token of my respect.——

I suppose by this time you have perused Dr. Doddridge's late book on "the Rise and Progress, &c." I desire you to tell me your mind freely concerning it in general, and one particular passage, p. 85*.—Is this agreeable to your own experience, or that of other judicious christians? When you return WALL and

* The passage referred to seems to have been altered in the next edition, and therefore is here omitted.

GALE [on Baptism] pray inform me how that matter appears to you. I am at present clearly satisfied in the right of Infants, according to the original grant of the covenant, *Gen.* xvii. 7.—but wonder at the warmth with which this controversy is managed amongst good men.

Make mention of me always in your prayers, and be assured of my remembrance of you.—The good family where I am will always esteem and love you. But what higher relish should we have of the favour and love of God! Think much of that: and when your thoughts descend to lower objects, do not forget him who, under many obligations, is most sincerely and affectionately yours,

H. FARMER.

LETTER IV.

No date.

REV. SIR,

I received the other day a very valuable present, which from the goodness of it, as well as from other circumstances, I conclude came from you. I wish that admirable spirit of piety, and that zeal to do good to the souls of men which your performance discovers, were so common as not to be the distinguishing characteristic of a few writings. Heu pietas! Heu prisca fides! If your method of instruction were but followed, we might hope that, by the blessing of God, religion would be revived.—

It

It is astonishing to think how ignorant those are who go constantly to public worship, if they are deprived of the benefit of private instruction. I have had frequent opportunities of observing this, and therefore am pleased with every attempt to communicate divine knowledge to the rising generation. And it is a great grief to me to observe men's blind attachment to one catechism, so as not to be able to make use of any other, because it does not contain, in their apprehension, all the mysteries of the christian faith. What do you do in such circumstances? Are there none so zealously attached to certain phrases which you cannot use, as to be hindered from receiving benefit by your instructions? If there are any such, what method do you take to reconcile them to you? The knowledge of your sentiments and conduct relating to these points may be of service to me. Do not deny me your spiritual counsel, nor your most ardent prayers, that God would inspire me, and all the ministers of his word, with greater zeal to do good (guided by wisdom and prudence) and with a more intense concern to approve ourselves faithful to the great 'shepherd and bishop of souls.' I recommend you heartily to God and the blessing of his grace,

And am, Sir,

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

HUGH FARMER.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

*Lawrence Poultney Hill,
Wednesday Night. (No date).*

I have been this day with good Mrs. B——, who is still in the same dis-spirited condition, though I think she seems to be better in health. She desired me to inform you that she is under great concern about her daughter—— and meets with many other troubles—— I wish it lay in my power to recommend her grandson.——I delivered your “*Considerations*,” &c*. and heartily wish the blessing of God may attend them. Our [public] affairs, being at present in very much the same posture they were in when you wrote, I made no alterations in your paper, nor can I now, because it is, I suppose, published: Though to-morrow we expect news of an action between the troops under the Duke and the rebels, the last advice informing us that they were within four miles of one another. But some think the rebels will, if possible, decline coming to an engagement with the king’s troops. But the hearts of all men are in the hands of God, and so are the fates of nations. For his own name sake I hope he will save us. God grant we may be prepared to meet him, whether he comes to us in the way of judgment or of mercy.——

* Relating to the Rebellion in 1745. Mr. Toms was accustomed to print small religious pieces suited to the times, to be distributed gratis.

With regard to the character of the Highlanders, they are mountain robbers, who live by plundering the lowlands, and are miserable vassals to their chiefs, whom they are obliged to serve wherever and as long as they are required: bred up in Romish superstition and ignorance. And they are joined by the Scotch Episcopalians, or Non-jurors, who though they differ but little from the former, and never gave the government any security for their fidelity, have enjoyed a toleration, and many of them are indebted to the present royal family, not only for their liberty but their lives; and some had received particular marks of the king's favour. But to serve the Catholic cause, the vilest crimes are even sanctified.

Popery is a mystery of iniquity, which ought to be deeply searched into, that it may be exposed to view. The great art of the English priests lies in disguising and palliating it. Their doctrine and practice with regard to one capital point, is well represented in a small performance, called "Britain's Memorial against the Pretender and Popery." Mr. Chandler is the author. I mention this, because a proper one to give away.

I have not written to Dr. Doddridge upon the head you desired, because I know his hands are full. Pray let me hear from you soon. Should be glad of any opportunity of serving you in town. I approve your scheme of a 2d Edition of "The Insincere Professor." Wish to know when I may to see you. In the mean time I remain,

Your most sincere friend,
And very humble servant,

H. FARMER.
LETTER

LETTER V.

Jan. 28, 1747.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

At Mr. Hett's Shop.

— — Your “Memoirs” *—I have put into the hands of Mr. Johnson, in order to be sent to the press.—I have not ventured to make any alteration in your copy, both because I cannot very well read it, and because I hope it does not require any; unless it be in the passage that refers to Mr. Foster †. I have just reason to suspect my own judgment, but your friend Mr. Barker seems to think it might be as prudent to decline saying any thing personal; though he approves much of your general observation, that my Lord Kil—ck's desiring the Sacrament, looked as if he wanted something beyond Repentance. You do not doubt of our zeal for the doctrine you maintain. The only point in doubt is, whether it will serve that doctrine to introduce Mr. F.'s omission, and whether it may not prejudice some against your book, and hinder them from receiving that benefit which may reasonably be expected if it contained nothing per-

* Of a remarkable Convert, with a sermon preached at his death.

† Afterwards Dr. Foster, who published an account of his attendance on the rebel nobleman Lord Kilmarnock, previous to his execution. The piece gave offence to many, being thought defective in regard to the Gospel method of Salvation.

sonal,

sonal, or that had any appearance of determining in what manner Mr. F—— will be treated by his judge. But this I submit entirely to your judgment. I could wish I was better able to advise you. I know many of my brethren whose judgment might perhaps be of use in revising what you design for the press; but in zeal to serve you, none I believe can easily go beyond me. I most readily engage to take * * and correct the press. So far as I can judge, this piece is well calculated to do good, and I most sincerely pray that your end in publishing it may be answered. I shall put it into the hands of several.

I bless God I know of one, who lives in a friend's family, lately awakened and converted in much the same manner as your Convert, by the divine blessing, on reading such books as Dr. Wright on Regeneration, which I put into her hands, and I verily believe your "Memoirs" will be a great comfort and advantage to her. May it advance the Redeemer's interest in many!

Mr. Johnson is of opinion you had better publish the Sermon and Memoirs together—unless therefore we hear from you to the contrary, they will be so published, and with all convenient speed.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate friend and servant,

H. FARMER.

* * Covered with the seal.

Extract from another Letter.

—— I thank you very kindly for your last directions with regard to —— So far as they are practicable I shall take care to follow them. But no instance of your christian friendship is more grateful than the hint you drop about the danger of engaging in religious services without a religious frame. Nothing is more grievous to me than a defect in this. What but divine goodness could pardon even my best services! The more I study myself, the more cause do I see to lament my infinite distance from what I ought to be. But blessed be God, this thought leads me to the continual exercise of repentance and faith, and of earnest desires after further communications from the God of all grace, to whose care you are ever recommended by your affectionate friend and unworthy brother,

H. F.

* * * Since these sheets were printed off, the editor has been informed, by the Rev. T. Stedman, rector of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, that Mr. Farmer's place of nativity was a small hamlet called "the Isle," being almost surrounded by the river Severn, where his father lived upon a small farm in that part, called "the Isle Gate;" which place, though three miles distant, belongs to the above parish, where his name is registered in a part of that parish register, which is appropriated to the children of dissenters.

A letter since communicated by this gentleman, from Mr. Farmer to Dr. Doddridge, though not altogether fit for publication, is valuable as an evidence of high mutual esteem, and a continuation of a friendly correspondence.

THE END.

Dodson, Michael

Memoirs of the life and writings of the Rev. Hugh Farmer

London 1804

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